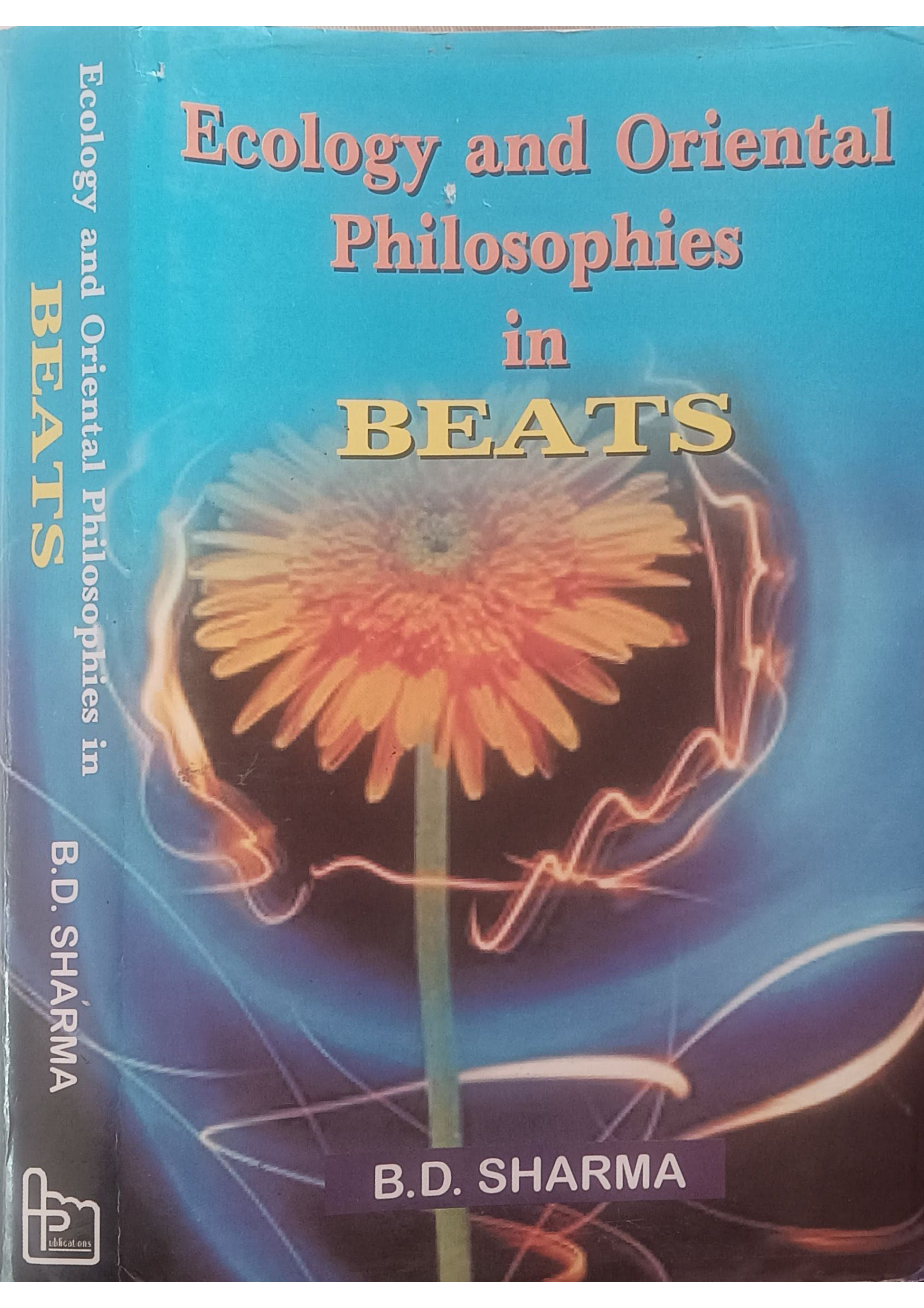
Ecology and Oriental Philosophies in BEATS



B.D. SHARMA

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The book is a study of how far the American Beat writers, especially Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, and Jack Kerouac have been influenced by the oriental philosophies, namely, Vedanta, Buddhism and Zen Buddhism, which concepts of these philosophies find projection in the literary compositions of these poets and fiction-writers and what they have to say about the 'scientific development' which is increasingly disturbing the ecology of not only America but of the whole globe. The Beats' was the earliest voice of protest against the scientists' ignoring the needs of the environment and drew the attention of the world to the fact that if the fruits of a philosophy had something missing in them the fault must be there in the seed itself. It was with this understanding that the Beats turned to the oriental philosophies and found that the oriental concepts of the organic unity of the whole universe, the transmigration of the soul and rebirth, compassion for the lower animals, nay regarding the whole universe as the manifestation of the Supreme Being enabled one to comprehend the universe better than the philosophy asserting the simultaneous existence of the forces of virtue and vice. And that endeared the oriental philosophies to the Beats, and led them to make in these philosophies a search for the remedies of the ills of the modern life. The book is an attempt to bring to light all such facts.

Rs. 600

ECOLOGY AND ORIENTAL PHILOSOPHIES IN THE BEATS

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By
Prof. B.D. Sharma

ANMOL PUBLICATIONS PVT. LTD.
NEW DELHI - 110 002 (INDIA)

ANMOL PUBLICATIONS PVT. LTD.
4374/4B, Ansari Road, Daryaganj
New Delhi - 110 002

Ecology and Oriental Philosophies in the Beats

© Author

First Edition, 2000

ISBN 81-261-0449-X

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PRINTED IN INDIA

Published by J.L. Kumar for Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi - 110 002 and Printed at Tarun Offset Press, Delhi.

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Preface

Most to the studies of the 'Beat' or the 'Beat Generation' writers are the studies of their ways of living, and adequate attention has not been paid to the literary merits of their works. That is why in this study an attempt has been made to keep all extra-critical considerations apart and to study their literary works as works of literature and to analyse in what ways oriental philosophies find projection in their compositions. No doubt, many compositions of the Beats can be regarded as the works of little literary value, but it is the task of a literary critic to separate the valuable form the not-valuable, and an attempt to do that has been made in this study.

Philosophical and literary movements, more often than not, defy political boundaries. That is why when one studies trends in literature and philosophy, one should not keep oneself confined to any particular country or continent. Likewise, when one talks of literary tradition as T.S. Eliot does in his essay 'Tradition and Individual Talent', one should not keep tradition confined to any political boundaries. It is in view of this fact that I have tried to broaden the field of tradition as much as is possible for me and I have given illustrations, to support my views from not only English but also Sanskrit and Hindi and the works of oriental writers. Such an approach in an imperative for a scholar when he writes about the Beats as they owe a number of things to a number of oriental languages and countries, though they have not been able to free themselves from the western philosophical views.

Likewise, I have not kept myself confined to any particular literary genre and have illustrated my arguments by taking examples not only from the poems and novels written by these writers but also from their essays, short-stories, and diary-entries, because neither the Beat movement nor the projection of the oriental philosophies kept itself confined to any particular genre. However, the three authors I have selected for special reference represent three aspects of the Beat literature: Jack Kerouac is a representative Beat novelist, Allen Ginsberg is a representative Beat protest-poet and Gary Synder a representative Beat nature-poet.

In my footnotes the year in the square brackets is the year of the first publication of a book in case the edition from which a passage has been quoted is not the first one. I have written the volume number of a journal in the Roman numerals and the issue number in the Arabic ones. I have used British spellings in my writing, but have retained American spellings in the passages quoted form American books.

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Acknowledgements

I am thankful to Mr. Gary Snyder for sending me four of his books which were not available in any of the libraries I approached for the purpose. I thank the University Grants Commission of my country for awarding me financial aid for books as it enabled me to have a large number of books I needed. I am also thankful to the American Studies Research Centre, Hyderabad, for the Teacher Research Grants it awarded me, as these grants enabled me to make use of the facilities available at the Centre and also for sending me books whenever I needed them. I also thank the members of the A.S.R.C. staff and the staff of American Library, New Delhi for making conditions in the libraries conducive to the carrying on of my research work there whenever I visited either library and enabling me to have the materials I needed at my disposal for as much time as their rules permitted.

I heartily thank all the members of my family for sparing me to undertake and complete this project and undergoing inconveniences of numerous sorts.

B.D. SHARMA

1

Introduction: The Beat Generation Movement

Critics have studied the Beat Generation writers[1] as existentialists[2], a community of disaffiliates[3], unprincipled people[4], romantics[5], anti-political people[6], rebels against the authority of Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot[7], and bohemians.[8] Jack Kerouac, the Beat novelist, who also took upon himself the duties of the theoretician of the movement observes in his article 'The Origin of the Beat Generation': "The word 'beat' originally meant poor, down and out, dead-beat, on the bum, and, sleeping in subways. Now that the word is belonging officially it is being made to stretch to include people who do not sleep in subways but have a certain new gesture, or attitude,... 'Beat Generation' has simply become the slogan or label for a revolution in manners in America."[9] But poverty and sadness, the habit of sleeping in the subways and revolution in manners are the external manifestations of the Beat thought rather than the thought itself. In his article 'Beatniks and Tradition' John P. Sisk enlists some of the features of the Beats and says; "In their enthusiastic acceptance of the visionary and spiritual element in life in their indiscriminate assertion that all is holy — that we are all, as Kerouac says, angels even if we do not know it, in their passionate concern with the individual and their rejection of all that inhibits his free development, in their unqualified commitment to experience, they underlie

traditionally sacred American patterns of thought and action."[10] He also asserts that the Beats belong to "the subversive tradition in American literature."[11] Two assertions can be made in this context: first, no philosophy can logically regard everything as holy even if it claims to do so, because in this universe we have diametrically opposed things and ideas and if one accepts one of them as holy, the thing opposed to it becomes unholy by implication; and secondly, the Beats too discriminate between things and regard some of them as acceptable and others as unacceptable [see *infra*].

Thomas F. Merrill believes Beats to be the champions of individual liberty and embodies his view in the words: "The vision of people 'hiding the knowledge from one another' testifies to the Beat conviction that people are more real (and presumably better) than society allows them to be and also that collective society has an awesome control over people that transcends their individual wills."[12] Explaining their attitude towards the individual and the society he observes: "The Beat is an indifferent enemy of Society as it appears to him; he is 'as enemy' because he is appalled by the ugliness of its materialism, the ugliness of its goals, and the emptiness of its values. He is 'indifferent because he has to realise that he cannot change society — change can only come from within. And so the Beatnik chooses not to fight. In the battle for social, spiritual, and esthetic progress, he is a conscience [*sic*] objector. He plays it 'cool'; he seeks to 'make the scene' as best as he can."[13] But Merrill does not pay due attention to the fact that a change in a man's internal sphere often causes a change in the external world too. The fact that America was discovered by a European in the fifteenth century can be taken as an example to illustrate the assertion made above. If no European had ever thought of discovering a sea-route to India, America would have remained an undiscovered

continent and in that case the history of the world would have been different from the present one. Secondly, supporting the claims of the individual's liberty against the claims of social control is a feature of a number of philosophies including those of Rousseau, Milton, and Shelley and so it cannot be regarded as the distinguishing feature of the Beats alone. If Beatism is to be identified only by this characteristic, Rousseau, Milton and Shelley should be included in the list of the Beats. But since nobody has done it, it is apparent that Beatism cannot be identified with love for the individual's liberty.

Thomas Parkinson refuses to believe that the rise of the Beats is a revolt. He explains his opinion in his article 'Phenomenon or Generation' when he says: "With very few exceptions, the beat and beatnik compose a social refusal rather than a revolt: as Allen Ginsberg announced to his audience in Chile, he is a rebel, not a revolutionist. They take no particular pleasure in tearing down a social fabric that they see as already ruined, and their attitude towards society is suspicious and evasive rather than destructive."[19] But the difference between refusal and revolt is one of degree rather than of kind. Whether we call the approach of the Beats a refusal or a revolt, one thing is definite: they object to a part of the main current of the American civilisation.

Carolyn Gaiser finds Beats to be hedonists and argues in the article 'Gregory Corso: A poet the Beat way': "As a philosophy the Beat might be considered a brand of hedonism, while demanding the right to fully experience, the three exponents of the Beat are asking that their behaviour be not only approved but applauded....

"Essentially, the Beat...is the psychology of self-expression, an attempt to murder the superego and liberate the id. It is the desire to break out of the traditional forms

for living, to rediscover the innocence of the natural man who lives by instinct rather than reason."[15]

If demanding a right to experience life to one's full had been the chief characteristic of the Beats, they should have been included among the romantics or anarchists and, then, there would have been no need to give them a distinguishing name. Gregory Corso himself takes up the task of explaining the chief features of the Beats and asserts that they are the upholders of love when he points out: "The Beat Generation is a generation of love. Not until the sun rejects you do I reject you, this is their love. They aren't violent. To be violent is not to be beat. To be beat is to be hip. Hip means love, means indifference, means not wanting to be bugged or to bug. Hip means metropolitan solitude, hip means being on a street corner bombed out of your mind."[16] However, as has been pointed out above, the universe has been planned in such a manner that diametrically opposed things exist here side by side and, so, nobody can love everything and if one loves one of two such things one hates the other thing by implication. Even the Beats do not love everything. If one loves pleasure, it is implied that one hates pain. Gary Snyder, for instance, hates the killing of people in the name of freedom and embodies his view in the poem 'Spel Against Demons'. Kerouac shows the horrors of war in his novel *The Town and the City* and thus embodies in it his dislike of war.

John Ciardi regards the Beats as juvenile delinquents and says: "The fact is that the Beat Generation is not only juvenile but certainly related to juvenile delinquency through a common ancestor whose best name is Disgust.... The Beats have found their kicks in an intellectual pose, in drugs..., and in wine, zen, jazz, sex, and a carefully mannered jargon."[17] But the term juvenile delinquency has nothing to do with the literary characteristics of the movement,

while a literary critic is concerned with the traits of a writer's literary works rather than with his extra-literary behaviour. Moreover, juvenile delinquency cannot be regarded as the distinguishing feature of the Beats because if it had been so, every juvenile delinquent could have been regarded as a Beat. But this is not done. Delinquency is a negative characteristic, we should try to find out positive characteristics of a school of thought.

Ralph Gleason believes that it is complete loss of hope that characterises a Beat writer and says: "To be beat means to be 'beat to the socks,' down and out discouraged and without hope."[18] But this assertion cannot be accepted on the ground that the Beat writers reject the views of the Establishment of their country in favour of some alternative values [see *infra*] and the man who has some alternative values to uphold cannot be regarded as one without hopes. Lawrence Lipton, who regarded the Beats as "a community of disaffiliates" and calls them "holy barbarians" says: "...this is not just another alienation. It is a deep-going change, a revolution under the ribs. These people are picking up where we — left off? — no, where we began. Began and loved it and wrote about it and waited for the world to catch up with us."[19] His approach is negative as disaffiliation is not a positive characteristic of a movement and everybody disaffiliated from a group cannot be called a Beat. In order to characterise a movement correctly, one has to mention what its adherents stand for.

Critics like T.G. Vaidyanathan and John Tytell find the literary works of the Beats to be characterised by the existential anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness. While discussing Kerouac's works, T.G. Vaidyanathan asserts:

> There is one significant aspect of Kerouac's work which may help to illuminate not only a great deal of Beat literature, but also that aspect of the American

> social scene of which Kerouac is such an ominous portent. This aspect is the particular form of anxiety that runs as a dark thread through his whole work. Paul Tillich the American existentialist and theologian, has distinguished three separate forms of anxiety: (a) the anxiety of fate and death; (b) the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness; and (c) the anxiety of guilt and condemnation.... We suggest that it is the second form of anxiety that is to be found as a powerful groundswell in Kerouac's work....[20]

Likewise, John Tytell, while trying to join the Beats with existentialists, Spenglerians and other upholders of absurdity, says: "While the Beats agreed with the Existentialist argument that man defines himself through his actions, they also shared a Spenglerian expectation of the total breakdown of Western culture. The Beats danced to the music of the absurdity they saw around them."[21] Making an assertion that this movement was "a crystallisation of a sweeping discontent with American 'virtues' of progress and power," Tytell finds the American Romantics to be the spiritual ancestors of the Beats. He asserts that the spritual ancesters of the Beats were men like Thoreau with his aggressive idealism, his essential conservative distrust of machines and industry, his desire to return to the origins of man's relations to the land; or Melville with his adventurous tolerance of different tribal codes; or Whitman, optimistically proclaiming with egalitarian gusto the raw newness and velocity of self-renewing change in America while joyously admiring the potential of the common man."[22] But Beats do not find life meaningless. If they had found it so, they would not have proposed alternative plans for the re-structuring of society as they do [see *infra*]. Bruce Cook finds Beats looking in specific principles and believes this fact to be one of the

causes of the shortness of the life of the Beat movement. He asserts, "...one reason [why] the purely literary phase of the movement was so short-lived was that it failed to develop specific principles and identifiable forms to which true believers would have to adhere."[23] He believes them to be nay-sayers and asserts: "Theirs was a sort of antimyth, one that turned the idea of America inside out. Instead of American cleanliness, the Beats offered dirt; for industry, sloth; and in place of the official, fundamentally Protestant American ethic, they presented their own, a morality with principles but no rules.... Accepting them, it was possible to reject some aspects of American culture, and still retain affection for those qualities of the national character that have always been most appealing — informality, enthusiasm, openness to adventure, and a kind of bold, plain-spoken honesty."[24] But the fact is that the Beats have well-defined positive characteristics and can be distinguished from any other group in an unequivocal manner and their standing for informality, enthusiasm, openness to adventure joins them with those who made these things the foundations of American civilisation [see *infra*]. Ajit Kumar Mishra too finds a Beat to be an unprincipled creature with no allegiance. He says: "Being a beat — the free, unprincipled beyond the possibility of defeat. The square fills the void with illusions, rationalisations and relationships: the beat accepts the void as a condition of his being. He tries to define (though unconsciously) his position in a world that is essentially hostile to him."[25] Mishra connects the Beats with Sartre, Camus and Hemingway, and asserts, "The Beatnik vision of life is the product of a process of negation and self-analysis reaching the penultimate point in Sartre, Camus, and Hemingway."[26] But the fact is that Beats try to analyse the plan underlying the universe and its relation with the Powers that govern it [see *infra*] and, thus, have a metaphysics of their own. Moreover, no movement can come into existence unless it is based on certain principles,

as it is only the commonness of approach to the problems of life that can bring and keep people together. If there had been no principles underlying the ways of Jack Kerouac, Neal Cassedy, Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, it would not have been possible for these people to remain together.

According to Sam Hynes the principles of the Beats "seem to be based on the negative proposition that the world can impose no valid moral restrictions upon the individual."[27] But the Beats do make positive propositions and, besides condemning what they reject in the existing set-up, they also suggest, as has been mentioned earlier too, alternatives [see *infra*].

Naresh Guha believes the Beat writers to be Romantics and asserts, "This association with Blake, and particularly with Whitman, which is by no means casual, should underline the fact that the literary affiliation of the Beat Generation is manifestly Romantic."[28]

Naresh Guha calls Beats 'new primitives' and finds them to be consistent in their approach: "These new primitives of the Beat Generation ... have decided to remain absolutely loyal to their undiluted inspiration. For enemies of Reason, this attitude is quite consistent."[29] But terms like Romantics and Classicists are used to indicate very broad categories, and if one wishes to understand an author or a movement closely, one has to make narrower categories and find out what distinguishes him or it from other authors or movements included in that broad category.

Gene Baro holds that the Beat writers are not interested in political questions and says: "The beatniks are anti-political and, while their rejection of society is accomplished by traditional means — by sex, drinks, drugs and the arts of self-expression — the rationale of their behaviour is

exotic and sophisticated, a matter of mysticism, philosophical solipsism and natural religion."[30] But Ginsberg does talk of political problems and does criticise political views of governments. For instance, he does it in his poem 'America' where he condemns the American Government for their policy regarding armament. He takes up contemporary political problems and personalities to write about. In 'Returning North of Vortex' he writes about Mao Tse Tung and the affairs in China when he says:

> Red Guards batting country workers in Nanking
> Ho-Tei trembles Mao's death near,
> Snow over Iowa
> cornstalks on icy hills
> bus wheels murmuring in afternoon brilliance toward
> Council Bluffs....[31]

Likewise, in the poem 'Chicago to Salt Lake by Air' he takes up the Vietnam problem when he says:

> If Hanson Baldwin got a bullet in his brain, outrage?
> If President Johnson got a bullet in his brain, fast Karma?
> If *Reader's Digest* got a bullet in its brain would it be smarter?
> March '68 P. 54 "Report from Vietnam, The foe is Hurting"
>
> * * * * *
>
> "The dismal picture of 1965, when I previously visited Vietnam,
> has been reversed: The Allies are winning, and the enemy is being hurt,"

> wrote "The *distinguishing military Editor of the New York Times*"
> The Dynosaur moves slowly over Chicago.[32]

He talks of the Vietnam War in his poem 'Bayonne Turnpike to Tuscarora' too where he says:

> Mansfield and U Thant ask halt Bombing North Vietnam
> State Department says "Tit For Tat."
> Frank Sinatra with negro voice
> enters a new phase—[33]

In the poem 'Returning North of Vortex' he criticises the attitude of the Chinese Establishment towards the Chinese country workers, in 'Chicago to Salt Lake by Air' he criticises the American action in Vietnam, and in 'Bayonne Turnpike to Tuscarora' he shows that the American State Department wrongly adopted the revengeful policy of 'tit for tat'. Thus, in these poems he rejects the policies of the Establishments of both America and China, especially their killing people in their own countries or abroad.

In his poem 'Smokey the Bear Sutra' Gary Snyder shows Buddha "smashing the worms of capitalism and totalitarianism."[2] This makes it evident that in his political views Snyder is anti-capitalism and anti-totalitarianism. Likewise, in his poem 'spel Against Demons' he raises the slogan "Down with demonic killers who mouth revolutionary/slogans and muddy the flow of change,..."[3] and gives expression to his rejecting the ways of killers whom he regards as demonic because he finds a dichotomy between what they profess and what they practise and thus try to give attractive labels to their undesirable deeds.

The Beats reject affluence itself and that is the principal offer of both capitalism and communism. In Snyder's poem

'Affluence' we have a glimpse of the thoughtless waste that accompanies affluence. In this poem he shows that in an affluent country trees are cut and reduced to legs and then converted into ashes with diesel oil.[36] While discussing why he rejects industrialisation, he observes in his article 'Four Changes':

> Man's careless use of 'resources' and his total dependence on certain substances such as fossil fuels (which are being exhausted, slowly but certainly) are having harmful effects on all the other members of the life-network. The complexity of modern technology renders whole populations vulnerable to the deadly consequences of the loss of any one key resource. Instead of independence we have over dependence on life-giving substances such as water which we squander. Many species of animals and birds have become extinct in the service of fashion fads—or fertiliser—or industrial oil—the soil is being used up; in fact mankind has become a locustlike blight on the planet that will leave a bare cupboard for its own children—all the while in a kind of Addict's Dream of affluence, comfort, eternal progress—using the great achievements of science to produce software and swill.[37]

He objects to industrialisation on the grounds that man's careless use of resources and fuels is causing harmful effects to the other members of the life-network. This passage also shows that the problems of industrialised world have driven the Beats to the views they hold and so a study of their works will prove helpful in arriving at the solutions of the problems the industrial world is facing.

Enlisting the characteristics of the poetry of the Beats Gene Baro asserts: "It is spontaneous, ungoverned, often

to the point of incoherence. Frequently, it is centered in a mood or a moment and is so wedded to the components of its occasion that much of its meaning must elude the uninitiated reader. It is coloquial, even slang-ridden, and despises conventional organisation, traditional syntax and spelling, fixed subject matter; it has, in this sense, an affinity for the surreal. It is involved in the uninhibited exposure of personal feeling and is, therefore, often embarrassingly sentimental or pathetic by common standards of taste. It is concerned to 'objectify', by recreating objects or experiences as they actually appear to have manifested themselves to the writer; the writer's veritable mental life is sometimes this 'object'."[38] But the Beats are not inconsistent so far as their sense of right and wrong is concerned and even though they appear to be writing impulsively, coherence is very much there in their works [see *infra*].

William Bittner finds the Beats a confusing lot and believes that "...they have shown a strong tendency to tackle the problems of the world on a personal level, shunning organised protest."[39] No doubt, the tendency to tackle the problems of the world is an individualistic one and often people try to solve problems without resorting to forming groups and organisations; but for this tendency people are not labelled as Beats. Even an organised effort to solve a problem begins as the effort of one individual. For example, the Christian movement was begun by one man, Jesus, and Communism was begun by Marx—again one single man. J. Betty Jr. asserts: "The beat generation has no interest in politics, only mysticism, that is their religion. It's kids standing on the street and talking about the end of the world."[40] But a study of the poems of Ginsberg and Snyder shows that both of them have well-defined political views, though in Kerouac's case it is not so. The narrator in Ginsberg's 'T.V. Baby' asks the question:

"Why are they [*sic*] starting that war all over again in Laos over Neutral Mind? Is the United States secret armies and spies overthrowing somebody like Angelica Balibanoff?"[41] This single question shows that the Beats are very much interested in political questions too and try to change the course of political affairs if they can. In fact the Beats take up various problems—political, economic, religious, and social—for treatment in their works. If the problem of war has been taken up by Ginsberg in his poem "America", it has been taken up by Kerouac in *The Town and the City*. In the poem 'Jaweh and Allah Battle' Allen Ginsberg takes up the problem of the ownership of the territory of Israel and suggests that plurality and the view that Allah, Yaweh and Christ are the names of one God can solve the problem, as he says:

> We shall triumph over the Enemy!
> Maintain our Separate Identity! Proud
> History evermore!
> Defend our own bodies here this Holy Land!
> This hill
> Golgotha never forget, never relinquish inhabit
> thru Eternity
> under Allah Christ Yaweh forever one God.[42]

What his statement implies is that it is honouring every religion—plurality in the field of religion—that can solve the problem of the war between the Jews and the Muslims over the question of the existence of Israel.

But what needs primary consideration in literary criticism is the study of a writer's ethics and metaphysics because it is from a man's ethics and metaphysics that all his actions, including his literary compositions, shoot forth. That is why it is essential to know what Beats believe to be right and what they reject as wrong. Putting them in one

category or another is not much significant as, such an effort requires ignoring some of their traits and over-emphasising some others. A fiction-writer's sense of right and wrong can be discovered through a study of the careers of his characters. If a character's sense of right and wrong is different from the writer's, the latter shows the former either encountering misery or, at least, ridicule; and if it is in harmony with the writer's, the character is shown to be successful in winning people's admiration and overcoming the difficulties of life. As a matter of fact, man tries, and has been trying, to understand what is right and what is wrong in the eyes of the force governing this universe, whether that force is given the name of God or Brahman or Allah or Jehova, or One. There are deeds for which he feels he is rewarded and there are deeds for which he feels himself being punished. It is on the basis of such experiences of life that he draws a line between the right deeds and the wrong ones. Prophets, moral preachers, legislators and teachers try to make rules only on their understanding of God's—or Universal—sense of right and wrong. The closer to God's sense of right and wrong a man's ethical sense is, the more valuable it is. And so is the case with a literary writer's works.

The Beat writers refuse to accept the official or the American Establishment's sense of right and wrong. Ginsberg declares: "...there is a crack in the mass consciousness of America—sudden emergence of insight into a vast national subconscious netherworld filled with nerve gases, universal death bombs, malevolent bureaucracies, secret police systems, drugs that open the door of God, ships leaving Earth, unknown chemical terrors, evil dreams at hand."[43] And the declaration makes it evident that the new developments in the world of science and the mankind's new experiences have led him to have an insight into the Universal sense of right and wrong. As a matter of

fact, there is nothing, wrong with a man's agreeing or disagreeing with the official or legal ethics. The ethics of Socrates was different from the legal ethics of his day and so was the ethics of Jesus Christ. If it had not been so, neither of them would have lost his life. But either of them valued his ethics much more highly than the ethics on which the contemporary laws had been made and decided to sacrifice his life rather than change his view of the Universal ethics. If a law violates the rules of Universal ethics, it is a man's duty to disobey it, but if it is in agreement with the Universal sense of right, every man must obey it. For instance, the experience of life makes it evident that the forces governing the universe like truthfulness and dislike falsehood and so a law which favours truthfulness and disfavours falsehood must be obeyed, while the law that disagrees with this fact must be disobeyed.

In Ginsberg's poem 'Ego Confession' the poet's sense of right and wrong finds explicit embodiment. Here the poet makes the speaker say that he wishes 'to be known as the most brilliant man in America', 'to be the spectacle of Poesy triumphant over trickery of the world/ Omniscient breathing its own breath thru War tear gas spy hallucination,..."[44] The speaker in this poem values brilliance, poetic gift and knowledge of every thing. What he admires includes the mystic wisdom, Dharma, extraordinary age at the service of the Dharma, the state of having forest-houses and farms, not fearing God or Death after one's 48th year, the accepting of lies and gaps between them with equal good humour, nourishing imaginative geniuses of the land, and giving money to poor poets; and what he rejects includes war, petrochemical industries, fear of God and Death.[45] This list shows that Ginsberg's sense of right and wrong is defective as he talks of taking even lies "with good humour." One who wishes to remain

on the desirable path will keep oneself away from lies and will never deviate from the path of truthfulness. And this feet is responsible for his associating himself with the other undesirable things like drugs.

Ginsberg commits a similar mistake when he tries to explain in his essay 'Prose Contribution to Cuban Revolution' and expresses his support for the 'acceptance of all strangeness in people as their nobility; staying *out* of conflict and politics, staying with sort of dostoyevskian-shakespearean [*sic*] *know*, ken, of things as mortal, tearful, transient, sacred — not to join one side or other for an Idea, however serious, realising the relativity & [*sic*] limitation of all judgements and discriminations....'"[46] The statement is full of contradictions. It is wrong to accept every strangeness in a man as his nobility. A man's frequently indulging in telling lies is as strange a thing as a man's never telling a lie; but the two forms of strangeness are not of the same kind and cannot be equated, the first being an undesirable thing, while the second being a desirable one. But Ginsberg overemphasises people's uniquenesses and wrongly considers every uniqueness to be a noble quality. Likewise, his view regarding taking sides cannot be accepted because one cannot help taking sides and when one decides not to take sides when two persons are quarrelling, one has unconsciously taken the side of the person who is enjoying an upper hand in the quarrel. Ginsberg's theory of having "respect for the 'irrational' or unconscious properties of the soul and [*sic*] disrespect for all law"[47] is again based on his confusing the laws violating the Universal or divine sense of right and wrong and the ones standing in agreement with it. One *must reject* the laws of the first kind but *must obey* those of the second kind. However, he is right when he comes to the vow "always to be faithful to that Absolute Eternal X [he] had thru [*sic*] destiny seen face to face..."[48] if by X he

means the embodiment of truth, goodness, and justice, as the vow implies accepting the Universal ethics rather than the ethics of an individual or that of a community.

An analysis of Ginsberg's poem 'Stanzas: Written at Night in Radio City' further enables one to arrive at the poet's ethics, as in this poem he ponders over the question as to what is worth-attaining in life. He finds that money does not make the mind saner nor does sex bring salvation; neither is he attracted towards machinery, nor does he find anything worthwhile in art or fame; he also rejects love and says: "Love is creeping under cover,/Where it hides its sleepy dole,/Else I were like any lover."[49] In this poem he also declares: "Nor sex will salve the sickened soul."[50] That is why it is wrong to believe that Beats stand for only sensuality.

Snyder's ethics is embodied especially in his poem 'Spel Against Demons' where he makes it evident that he stands for fearlessness, humour, detachment and knowledge, but derides anger, demonic killing, self-indulgence, aimless executions and slaughterings, and self-serving.[51] In 'Smokey the Bear Sutra' he upholds a man's going beneath appearances to discover truth, all creatures' "full right to live to their limits," "the forces that guard the wilderness" being the Natural State of the Dharma and the True Path of man on earth, and the values of compassion, mastering 'the Three mysteries of their own Body, Speech and Mind,' pruning out 'the sick limbs' of a country and burning 'the leftover trash', being in love with 'woods and rivers', Gods and animals, hobos and madmen, prisoners and sick people, muscians, playful women, and hopeful children', bringing a harmony between man and nature, love and caresses of men, women, and beasts; and, the last and the best, perfect enlightenment.[52] His Buddha or Saviour is 'Wrathful but Calm, Austere but Comic.'[53] In this very

poem Snyder speaks against American great centres of power, loveless knowledge, 'blind hunger', 'mindless rage', greed, war, useless attachments, the American civilisation that 'claims to save but only destroys', capitalism and totaltarianism, motor cars, houses, canned food, universities, shoes, air-pollution, and the police.

Ginsberg explains his metaphysical views in the poem 'Metaphysics' where he says:

> This is the one and only
> firmament; therefore
> it is the absolute world.
> The circle is complete.
> I am living in Eternity.
> The ways of this world
> are the ways of Heaven."[54]

Here Ginsberg refuses to believe that Eternity is different from this world. Here his views are anti-Christian as the Christian view of sin implies that people's ways are sinful and that they stand in need of modification, but Ginsberg's declaring that the ways of this world are the ways of Heaven implies that he is a humanist as he supports people's ways and can be called the people's, rather than God's, poet.

It is the interdependence of various parts of the universe and the significance of even its small fractions of which he talks when he says:

> One rain turns red dust green with leaves.
> One raindrop begins the universe.
> When the raindrop dries, worlds come to their end.[55]

His showing that even a raindrop makes significant changes in the universe suggests that he views everything in the universe to be significant. However, such statements should not be taken to mean that Beats do not like to bring about any change in the world. As a matter of fact, the Beats reject a lot of what exists at the moment. For instance, in his poem 'Spel Against Demons' G. Snyder acknowledges that demonic forces exist in the universe, and suggests that they need be resisted when he says:

> The release of Demonic Energies in the name of
> the people
> must cease
> Messing with blood sacrifice in the name of
> Nature
> must cease
> The stifling self-indulgence in anger in the name of
> Freedom
> must cease
> this is death to clarity
> death to compassion[56]

These lines make it evident that Snyder finds compassion and clarity or clear knowledge to be desirable things while self-indulgence and killing people to be undesirable activities.

In his poems like 'Song', 'Night Gleam' and 'The Blue Angel' Ginsberg celebrates love and declares it to be the highest value in life. In the poem 'Song', for example, he writes:

> No rest
> without love,
> no sleep
> without dreams

of love—
be mad or chill
observed with angels
or machines,
the final wish is love....[57]

In the poem 'Night Gleam' he says:

... and so went to dwell again in my heart
and worship the Lovers there, love's teachers,
youths and poets who live for ever
in the secret heart, in the dark night, in the full moon, year after year
Over and over thru the dull material world the call is made.[58]

And in 'The Blue Angel' he upholds love when he says: "I learned a world from each one whom I love:/so many worlds without a Zodiac."[59] But he does not pay attention to the fact that it is undesirable to love the undesirable and that it is hatred that is needed in order to encounter a sin. Being in love with *every* thing is being in a state of confusion. He who loves poison as much as nutritious food will soon deprive himself of life and he who loves sins as much as the ways of saints will find himself declared a sinner. One who is not confused has to make a distinction between what is worth-loving and what is worth-hating. Universal love is as much a mark of ignorance as universal hatred. If somebody believes that a thorn is as good a thing as a rose, it implies that for him a rose is as bad a thing as a thorn.

In a letter to Ginsberg Burroughs asserts that it is wrong to be responsible to social institutions when he writes: "A company because it is depersonalised and guided by no other principle than profit thereby surrenders all claims to ethical consideration. All codes of conduct that

have any validity are based on the relations between individuals. An individual entrusts money to me, and I would not steal the money even though I could steal it without danger of consequence.... A company never trusts anybody with anything. Therefore...personally I would not hesitate to defraud a company if I could."[60] This is a way how one can arrive at a wrong conclusion even if the starting point is right. If a company is indulging in a wrong practice, a man will not be doing the right thing in not hesitating to defraud it. "One wrong does not justify another." The right step for a man is to declare that a company should be guided by the principle of justice and should earn only as much profit as will not result in causing trouble to the consumer. No doubt, one should not be responsible to social institutions, but one must be responsible to the principles of truth, justice and righteousness. One has to study what is happening in life and come to inferences on the basis of one's findings. Just as poison kills the man who eats it, in the same way falsehood causes harm to the people who resort to making use of falsehood. That is why no truthful person should become false in order to punish a false man. But if a man refuses to take God into consideration he is very likely to commit the kind of mistake that Burroughs does. And on this ground Jesus Christ's assertion in the Bible that "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon"[61] is found to be true, because once a man decides to have none but economic considerations to be guided by, he is left without any ethics, because if one justifies a thing because it brings one money, one will have no noble virtue to be guided by and may justify even cheating and making false statements.

Commenting on Burroughs' view John Tytell observes:

"Burroughs maintained that there was pretense, dissimulation, and misrepresentation in acceptable business practices like advertising, public relations, and television... than in the scale of heroism. Since the Second World War, Burroughs claimed, the line between the legitimate and criminal activity had vanished:... He based his argument on the example of the farmers in the Rio Grande Valley who depended entirely on Mexican labor that was illegally imported with government co-operation and assistance."[62] Burroughs may not be wrong in maintaining that pretence, dissimulation and misrepresentation are practised in business, and he may be right also in discovering that Mexican labour was illegally imported with government co-operation and assistance, but if this led him to conclude that one was justified in cheating people, practising dissimulation and misrepresenting things, he is wrong. In this universe both light and the absence of light are in existence and so are honesty and dishonesty, and, truth and falsehood. If one man has chosen to be false, dishonest and ignorant, another man has no right to choose to be so on that ground. One has to remain true to the values of truth, justice, and honesty, and if a law violates them, one must violate the law, otherwise one must obey it. Jesus Christ's words: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled"[63] should guide one in this regard.

Kerouac too takes up political questions for treatment. When in *The Town and the City* he shows the horrors which the soldiers have to face when they go to the north polar area, the episode suggests that the novelist believes a war to be an undesirable thing. And in his poems of *Fudo Trilogy* Gary Snyder refuses to believe that the persons who are engaged in killing people are doing so for freedom and he declares that practices must cease.[64]

John E. Hart finds the Beat movement to be revolutionary and the Beats to be making a search for new solutions: "Members of the Beat Movement are not the first to have resisted established ways and customs. Those rebellious spirits in other revolutionary movements — the Puritan, the Enlightenment, the Romantic and Transcendental, the Pre-Raphaelite, the Realists, the Imagists — had scorned old solutions in their search for styles and ways that were more common, simple, and natural to men. Likewise, the Beat Generation not only rejected the established order, but in turning to a more distant past, sought values that were radical and primitive."[65] But his putting the Puritan movement and the Pre-Raphaelite movement in the same category shows that he pays little attention to the views upheld by the champions of these movements and calls them revolutionary movements because their upholders said a few things against what had been going on in the period immediately preceding them. Such a broad categorisation is of little use when a movement is being studied minutely. The Puritans wished people to purify their ways and become more religious than they were but the Pre-Raphaelites wished people to be more secular than religious. And the Beats reject the very foundation of the Christian doctrine. That is why putting the Puritans and the Beats side by side will be of little analytic value.

Ernest Van Den Haag finds Beatness to be an affectation and says: "Being 'beat' is, then, in the first place an affectation. Affectations are, by definition, what replaces feelings — and, in the ambitions, passions — when the affected want for them, but are unable to have them. They are feelings wished for and not felt. Since he is trying to convince himself, which in our culture is done largely by convincing others, the affected person is likely to be strident about his enthusiasm. Where actual feeling had been stunted

entirely, the affected person, though longing for it, is unable to identify it. Hence, he is likely to confuse it with sentimentality and, on the other hand, sensations (kicks). The 'beat' hipster does the former in his vague pseudo-biological, psycho-philosophical theorising and the letter in his practice."[66] What can be said in this regard is that if being beat had been mere affectation, there would not have been sincerity and force in the works of the Beat writers.

Donald Hall regards the rise of the Beat Generation as one of the attacks on the orthodoxy based on the authority of T.S. Eliot and the New Critics.[67] But one thinks of attacking something when one finds it to be hindering one's movement. That is why what is needed is the study of such a one's goal and direction of movement. The Beats too attacked orthodoxy because it hindered their movement towards their goals. And so what is needed is a study of these goals.

John Tytell refutes the theory that the Beat poets have revolted against the tradition of T.S. Eliot and Pound and says: "It would be wrong to suggest that the Beats rejected the legacy of Eliot or Pound. Ginsberg, in 'Death to Van Gogh's Bar', makes Pound his secretary of economics, and *Howl* is a poem in the tradition of *The Waste Land*. Pound with his attacks on banking..., and on the credit system to which most of the Western world is now in bondage, and with his devotion to the poetry of the East, is regarded with considerable admiration by the Beats; Gary Snyder, in his verse line especially, can be seen as a literary descendant. No, what was rejected was the tendency towards abstraction..., and the abnegation of self that is suggested by the footnotes to *The Waste Land*."[68] The right kind of approach is to study a movement as it is rather than making efforts to put it in certain categories already made

by the ancients. It is inevitable for a writer to be influenced by the other writers of various ages, but it is also inevitable for him to be different from everybody else, as in this world there is no repetition and even when one tries to be exactly like another, one cannot escape facing frustration. What is needed is the study of the themes the Beats have taken up in their works and the literary techniques they have employed to embody them. When the problem is approached from this point of view the first thing that catches attention in the works of the Beats is that they are the studies of the miseries man and other animals are encountering in this world. We find it to be so if we turn to Kerouac's novels. For instance: *The Town and the City* is the story of the sufferings and death of George Martin; *Visions of Gerard* is the novel in which we have a record of the sufferings and death of an innocent boy; and in *Tristessa* the novelist records the sufferings of a narcotic-addict. Thus in the world of the Beats suffering is so widespread that even innocent people cannot escape it. And if in *Tristessa* it is a sinner whose sufferings have bean recorded, in *Visions of Gerard* a saint is shown facing miseries of various kinds in his life.[69] In Kerouac's novel *The Town and the City* George Martin undergoes terrible sufferings and, then, painful death of cancer. How widely devouring death is, has been shown in the passage: "Many of them were buried there, grandfathers, grandmothers, unknown lost progenitors of them, forgotten, dark aunts, uncles, cousins, ancient brothers and sisters and sourceless kin, and the kin of other families."[70] Peter, in this novel finds life full of struggles, though he also finds hope in the attainments which accompany that struggle and so his view is not absolutely dark: "He saw that all the struggles of life were incessant, laborious, painful, that nothing was done quickly, without labour,... They went on for ever and were forever incomplete, far from perfect, refined, or smooth, full of

terrible memories of failure and fears of failure, yet, in the way of things, somehow noble, complete, and shining in the end."[71] Thus, he finds life worth-living, rather than something fruitless. His belief that painful struggles bring with them noble, complete and shining rewards shows that he has not lost faith in life.

Suffering assumes various forms in the works of the Beats: in *The Visions of Gerard* it appears in the form of domestic quarrels, as here Manuel and his wife frequently quarrel; in *Visions of Cody* it takes the form of the anxiety caused by death-consciousness, especially when Jack says: "... I'm saying, 'Jesus Christ, people die don't they, I mean, what happens when you die? What happens after you're dead? What goes on? 'Bull says, 'Well, when you die you're dead, that's all, he says, 'they just don't...do anything but d-i-i-i-i-e...(*extending* die for two seconds....') So, you see, it's always like that, see, but always going up and down Eighth Avenue the two of us."[72] In Ginsberg's poem 'The Voice of Rock' it takes the form of terror by which a murderer finds himself haunted and Ginsberg writes:

> Murder has the ghost of shame
> that lies abed with me in dirt
> and mouths the matter of my fame.
> With voice of rock and rock engirt,
> a shadow cries out in my name;
> he struggles for my writhing frame;
> my death and his were not the same,
> what wounds have I that he is hurt?[73]

and in Ginsberg's poem 'Complaint of the Skeleton to Time' it takes the form of anxiety caused by the short lives of things and the poet meditates over the problem whether anything can escape the sickle of Time and requests:

Take the art which I bemoan

In a poem's crazy tone;
Grind me down, though I may groan,
To the starkest stick and stone;
Take them, said the skeleton,
But leave my bones alone.[74]

In his poem 'Hymn' the speaker finds his imagination incapable of expressing his 'bleakly pining' for a 'sweet immaterial paradise.'[75] He calls it 'the clock of light' and regards it as "the very summa and dove of the unshrouding of finality's joy whence come the purely streams of reves and honey-thoughts and all like dreamy essences our hearts therefrom so filled with such incomparable and crownly creaminess one never knew whence it came...."[76] The 'clock of light' is the phrase Ginsberg uses to describe the knowledge of the Infinite, or the highest form of enlightenment, because it is the knowledge of the Infinite that is the source of enlightenment. In Snyder's poems man is shown engaged in killing birds and cutting trees, and the people are shown killing their fellows in the name of people, nature and freedom.[77]

The Beats are also concerned with the problem of enlightenment which includes the knowledge of not only the perceptible side of the universe but also the imperceptible world. That is why Beats are interested in visions, dreams and the thoughts and feelings which visit a man in a state of intoxication. They pay attention every part to the universe and exclude the knowledge of nothing from their province. In fact, the Beats try to connect the Ultimate with the immediate: if they meditate on metaphysical questions, they also meditate on the material problems of life. For example, in the poem 'Thoughts Sitting Breathing' Allen Ginsberg puts political, economic and personal problems

with 'OM MA NI PA DMI HUM' and joins *Om* with the pride of perfumed money, music food from China, a place to sit quiet."[78] It is for such practices that for Jane Kramer Ginsberg "has become something of a symbol of the profound and often comic incompatibilities between the values of the Establishment and the values of an amalgamnated hippie — pacifist — activist — visionary — orgiastic — anarchist — orientalist — psychedelic underground whose various causes and commitments he always managed to espouse."[79] Likewise, in his poem 'Yes And It's Hopeless' Ginsberg turns his attention to problems like "...the energy crisis, the protein crisis 1690, the Folklore Crisis, the Aboriginal Crisis, the Honkie Crisis, the old Nazi Crisis, the Arab Crisis, the Chrysophrase Crisis, Tungsten, the Crisis in Panama, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Venezuela, Santo Domingo, Haiti, Cuba, Florida, Alabama, Texas, New Jersey, New York, East 10th Street, the Crisis in San Juan Capistrano, the Oil-spill in Bolinas Bay, Santa Barbava's tartide, the crisis of the Loch Ness Monster and the Dublin Bomb Crisis,..."[80] Ginsberg has included a large number of problems in this list and the fact suggests that Ginsberg here talks of the failures of the existing political approaches to solve the problems of the world. Such an approach is adopted by those who wish to replace a part or the whole of the existing civilisation. Likewise, Kerouac's Sal Paradise wants to know: "'What's going to happen to us when we die?'"[81], whether God exists or not,[82] and whether the visions people have are real or unreal and what spirits are pursuing people,[83] and thus voices the novelist's curiosity to know metaphysical facts.

Beats themselves claim that they are the seekers of truth. For instance, Allen Ginsberg says in his poem 'Back on Times Square, Dreaming of Times Square': "But we were never nightmare hooligans but seekers of the blond

nose for Truth/ Some old men are still alive, but the old Junkies are gone—."[84] He makes such a claim not only for himself but also for his fellow Beat writers. In his poem 'Aether' he calls Kerouac a prophet when he says:

> Kerouac: I salute yr [*sic*]
> wordy beard. Sad Prophet:
> Salutations and low bows from
> baggy pants and turbaned mind and horned foot
> arched eyebrows and [*sic*] Jewish Smile —
> One single specimen of Eternity — each of us poets.[85]

In *Desoletion Angels* Kerouac goes to the extent of saying that life becomes useless if one does not try to find out the mystery of life and the ulitmate reality behind it when he writes: " 'Why else should we live but to discuss (at least) the horror and the terror of all this life, God how old we get and some of us go mad and everything changes viciously — it's that vicious *change* that hurts, as soon as something is cool and complete it falls apart and burns—."[86] Similar is the case with other Beat poets. Ginsberg embodies his yearning in his poem 'Mescaline' when he says: "I want to know what happens after I die."[87] Likewise in his poem 'Howl' he describes 'the best minds of [his] generation' to be the people "who drove cross-country seventy-two [*sic*] hours to find out if I had a vision or you had a vision or he had a vision to find out Eternity"[88] and "who fell on their knees in hopeless cathedrals praying for each other's salvation and lights and breasts, until the soul illuminated its hair for a second."[89]

These writers talk of having the mystic experience of seeing visions. This is true of Ginsberg as well as Kerouac. Kerouac, for instance, talks of them in his novels *Visions of*

Cody, Visions of Gerard and *Tristessa*. In *Visions of Gerard* Kerouac depicts a character named Gerard Duluos who attracts the attention of people by "his astonishing revelations of heaven."[90] How Cody appeared to be in a vision is described here:

> My first great vision of Cody didn't come, as I say, as I keep saying, as though I had to struggle to keep saying until 1946, goodly two years after I met him in that naked door. It was as if he was a superhuman spirit walking, or that is racing in flesh sent down to earth to confound me not only in my actions but in my thoughts; wild, wild day I suddenly looked from myself to this strange angel from the other side ... of Time — which he kept talking about all the time. Cody now says 'Time-goes-by-fast'! — you don't realise or notice or come to tell how *fast - time - flies*![91]

And the information that is given through it is that time flies.

Ginsberg talks of a vision in his poem 'Psalm' where the speaker claims:

> Now I have built my Love a sepulchre
>
> * * * *
>
> Grieving for the lost entempled deed,
> And Him who appeared to these dead eyes,
> And Him my wakened beating mind remembered,
> And Love that moved in substance clear or bone,....[92]

If by the words 'Him' is meant 'God' the speaker is claiming

to have had His vision. Ginsberg calls an experience of this kind a "hallucinatory-mystical experience."[93]

Kerouac's character Bull in *On the Road* believes that the dead can reappear and that the living people can have contacts with them. The fact is evidenced by what he says to Sal Paradise in *On the Road:* " 'Mankind will someday realise that we are actually in contact with the dead and with other world, whatever it is; right now we could predict if we only exerted enough mental will, what is going to happen within the next hundred years and be able to take stops to avoid all kinds of catastrophes.' "[94] Sal Paradise claims to have had a vision of God in a cloud and describes his experience in the following words: " 'As we crossed the Colorado-Utah border I saw God in the sky in the form of huge gold sunburning clouds above the desert that seemed to point a finger at me and say, 'Pass here and go on, you're on the road to heaven.' "[95] Dean, another character in the novel, believes Slim to be God and the fact is recorded by the narrator in the words: "Now Dean approached him, he approached his God; he thought Slim was God; he shuffled and bowed in front of him and asked him to join us.' "[96]

In the following passage Kerouac's Sal Paradise uses the word 'vision' in the sense of 'day-dream': " 'As a child lying back in my father's car in the back seat I also had a vision of myself on a white horse riding alongside over every possible obstacle that presented itself: this included dodging posts, hurling around houses, sometimes jumping over when I looked too late, running over hills, across sudden squares with traffic that I had to dodge through incredibly—.' "[97] Jack's sentence in *Visions of Cody*: " 'Cody saw angels of heaven through everything, in Mexico' "[98] suggests that visions are the creations of imagination rather than facts.

The Beats regard dreams too as parts of reality and thus try to explore the world which is beyond the perceptive power of senses. Kerouac shows dreams to be the shadows of coming events in *The Town and the City* when Mrs. Martin's dream in which she is assured by Julian, her dead son, that she need not worry about Ruthey as she will recover, comes out true in actual life."[99] Likewise, Mickey's "dreams of wild winds", and "ragged racing clouds" come true the next morning.[100] This is how Kerouac establishes a close relationship between the world of dreams and that of actualities. Gerard meets Virgin Mary in his dream and she asks him to come to her.[101] The dream comes true as he dies after painful illness. Peter in *The Town and the City* is horrified to find his dream to have come true: "Peter remembered his dream about the old haunted house, and the house of death, and the gypsies, and all the darkness and helpless fear of it. It was strange to realise that he had obsurely and inexpressibly foreseen all this in that dream, and he was filled with a vague terror and premonition."[102]

Drug-addicts are the favourite characters of the Beats and the narcotics they consume are Peyote, Mescaline, Ayahusscs, Lysergic Acid, Hashish concentrates, Psylocybin Mushrooms and Strobiscopic lights.[103] Kerouac claims to have had a vision of the Cross in a state of intoxication and the incident has been recorded in *Jack Kerouac: A Biography* by Ann Charters when she writes: "He had the intuitive feeling that he was in a special state of grace if he could just hold out a little longer, and at that moment he was rewarded with a vision of the Cross that broke through his long, anguished nightmare, bringing sweet relief."[104] Gary Snyder too makes a similar claim while talking of visions and illumination-seeking: "This is most easily done by systematic experimentation with narcotics. Marijuana is a daily standby and peyote is the real eyeopener. These are sometimes supplemented by dips into yoga technique,

alcohol, and Subud. Although a good deal of personal insight can be obtained by the intelligent use of drugs being high all the time leads nowhere because it lacks intellect, will, and compassion; and a personal drug kick is of no use to anyone else in the world."[105] In his article 'Peyote' Jack Green explains as to how one is able to have a vision in a state of intoxication:

> It must be that the exhaustive preparation, especially the unconscious preparation involved in meditation, leads to a sudden *split*, which is perceived as a sudden unity .... at a certain moment the split is complete *all that is perceived is free* this is the moment of satori in my experience, peyote frees in successive, sharply defined steps I wasn't aware of anything being wrong with me until the moment when it "changed state" and became right after each step, what still wasn't free *existed*, but wasn't visible, so subjectively it didn't exist.[106]

Whether intoxication causes any spiritual enlightenment is doubtful. However, a man's perception is definitely changed when he is in a state of intoxication as is evident from the behaviour of any narcotic-addict. John Blofeld goes to the extent of claiming that intoxicating drugs take an addict beyond the bounds of thought and asserts: "No mental concept is involved, only experience — a unique perception, joy-bestowing, that leads to imperturbable tranquility, to recognition of the beauty inherent in every flower, in every grain of dust, cement or drug, and to unqualified liberation from the human state."[107]

Paul O'Neil finds Beatism to be 'a cult of the Pariah' and says, "... the Beat Generation can be much more accurately described as a cult of the Pariah. It yearns as for ... the hobo jungle and the slum, primarily to escape

regimentation."[108] But the fact is that the works of the Beats are studies of people like writers, hitchhikers, hobos, "angel-headed hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night."[109], ascetics, dying people, and drug addicts and such left-behinds of the civilisation and they should be studied as such. It is wrong to believe that the Beats stand for the ways of such people. They present before their readers the experiences and feelings of the people who have not been given any significant place in the organised society and are leading irregular lives. Their works embody the thoughts which may visit the minds of such characters, the activities in which they may indulge and the way they may think about organised societies in different parts of the world. The right approach to the study of literature is regarding it as the study of life done with a view to finding out universal laws underlying it. No doubt Kerouac's Dean says: " '... everything is fine and there's no need in the world to worry, and in fact we should realise that it would mean to us to UNDERSTAND that we're not REALLY worried about ANYTHING.'"[110] Yet this should not lead one to believe that Kerouac wishes a man to regard Dean as a model man. One should wait till one comes to the end of the novel where Dean starts reaping unhappy consequences of his behaviour. Dean's behaviour makes him father of a number of children including an illegitimate one, and then Sal reminds him of undesirability of his behaviour saying: "'You can't go all over the country having babies like that. Those poor little things'll grow up helpless. You've got to offer them a chance to live.'"[111] Since Kerouac shows that Dean's behaviour makes him rootless and insecure and causes misery not only to others but also to him, the novel should be taken to mean that in *On the Road* Jack Kerouac derides the ways of people like Dean and does not support them. Such characters have been depicted by Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and Gary

Snyder. If Dean Moriarty has an unquenchable thirst for wandering in *On the Road*, and is usually accompanied by Sal Paradise, Cody has this thirst in *Visions of Cody* and has Jack and Watson to accompany him.

Even the obscenity in their works is caused by the fact that their works are the studies of the people who have not been able to adjust themselves in society and are leachers at heart. If it is desirable to depict the characters' ways and thoughts faithfully, Beats' including obscene passages in their works is not in disagreement with their subject-matter. A study of the life of a lecher cannot escape such passages. Such passages are there, for example, in *Visions of Cody*.[112] Even in other parts of the world such people are found indulging in profane behaviour. If literature is to record truthfully what happens in life, one cannot escape recording profanities and obscenities in one's works. In the literary works like the *Gita* and *Katha Upanishad* in which we have the records of the virtuous deeds of the virtuous people, we do not have even a distant mention of any profanity at all. But the literature of the Beat writers does not belong to that category. However, since it is essential to know the ways in which maladjusted people behave if one wishes to understand the universe in its entirety, the works of the Beats will be found useful.

Their characters come from the lower sections of society or are castaways. For example, the Martins in Kerouac's novel *The Town and the City* are a family of a small trader, a factory-worker, and a soldier; Dean Moriarty in *On the Road* is a road-addict, and so is Sal Paradise for some time; Japhy in *The Dharma Bums* is an ascetic who loves wilderness; Gerard's father in *Visions of Gerard* is a printer; Mrs. Martin in *The Town and the City* is a worker in a shoe-shop, so is Gerard's mother in *Visions of Gerard*. Many characters of Kerouac are unemployed people who have no regular

income and depend on the mother for financial support. This is so, for example, in *The Town and the City* where Mrs. Martin works in a shoe-shop to support the family. There are soldiers in *On the Road* and *The Town and the City* but they are no more the parts of the machinery of the Establishment. The speaker and his friend in Ginsberg's poem 'The Green Automobile' spend their time travelling and while doing so they talk of meditating for 'supernatural illumination', use obscene language in their utterances, and observe the activities of the people without engaging themselves in any gainful or productive activity. Gary Snyder prefers wild life to the civilised one and he admires the ways of the primitive communities like the Red Indians. For instance, in his poem 'For a Far-out Friend' he says:

> And I thought — more grace and love
> In that wild Deva life where you belong
> Than in this dress — and — girdle life
> You'll ever give
> Or get.[113]

In the poem 'Milton by Firelight' he goes to the extent of calling Milton's *Paradise Lost* "a silly story"[114] and declares it to be of more use to be a single jack miner who can blast granite and build a switch bank that lasts several years.[115]

As some police-charges, which have been recorded by Ann Charters in her book *Jack Kerouac: A Biography* in the words: "Huneke, who was thirty-four at the time — ten years older than Allen — had served sentences on six narcotics charges and one burglar tool charge. Priscilla Arminger, who was twenty-four, had been arrested three times for narcotics addiction. She and Allen were held in jail in default of $ 2,500 bail. All of them were charged together with burglary, grand larceny, receiving stolen goods and attempting to run over a policeman"[116], show

the Beats were regarded as violators of law and the experiences they embody in their works are their own, though they may have been exaggerated or distorted.

Beats also describe the ways of the lower animals. Kerouac, for instance, describes the ways of ants in *The Dharma Bums* in which Ray Smith, a lover of ants, says: "'My other great friends were the ants, ... I even got down on my knees and talked to the ants.'"[117] Here Kerouac shows ants to be the companions of human being. In *Visions of Gerard* he shows a cat to be on intimate terms with a man. This is how the cat behaves: "Meanwhile the cat is comfortably ensconced at Cruz's face... place where she lies at the foot of the bed, curled, the way she sleeps all night while Tristessa curls at the head and they hook feet like sisters or like mother and daughter and make one little bed do comfortably for two—...."[118] These are the illustrations of companionship between man and animals and it is for this that the Beat writers, especially Kerouac and Gary Snyder, stand.

.Gregory Corso also voices the groans of the victims in the present-day civilisation. For instance, in his poem 'The Mad Yak' he shows how man oppresses lower animals and makes the Yak say:

> I am watching them churn the last milk
> they'll ever get from me.
> They are waiting for me to die;
> They want to make buttons out of my hones.
> Where are my sisters and brothers?
> That tall monk there, loading my uncle,
> he has a new cap.
> And that idiot student of his —
> I never saw that muffler before.

Poor uncle, he lets them load him.
How sad he is, how tired!
I wonder what they'll do with his bones?
And that beautiful tail!
How many shoelaces will they make of that![119]

Gregory Corso has given voice to a yak and makes it feel that yaks are kept by man only for selfish ends, for milk and portering so long as they are alive and for their bones when they die. Gary Snyder, in his poem 'Smokey the Bear Sutra' declares: "... all creatures have the full right to live to their limits and that deer, rabbits, chipmunks, snakes, dandelions, and lizards all grow in the realm of the Dharma...."[120] Thus he raises his voice against the practice of killing birds, fish and other lower animals..

The conflict between the rulers and the ruled too has been shown in their works. Their principal characters belong to the section of the people being ruled, while the cops behave like the representatives of the rulers. This is so in Kerouae's *On the Road* where the military officer and the cops continually appear to hinder the activities of Sal and his fellows. Allen Ginsberg also in the opening section of his poem *Howl* evinces how oppression has driven people in America to madness and how it is causing misery to people. Ginsberg has also written about wars like those of Vietnam and Bangla Desh in his poems 'New York to San Fran' and 'September on Jessore Road' and has drawn the attention of the readers of the miseries which the Establishments in various countries are causing to the people. But the Beats should not be considered to be Marxists on this ground as they do not show workers rising in rebellion against the ruling classes and snatching state-power from them. In the 'Footnote' to his poem 'Howl' Ginsberg declares everything to be holy and this statement signifies the fact that since both the rulers and the ruled

are holy, there is the need of coming to the right understanding of things rather than one fighting and talking of converting the rulers into the ruled. Secondly, Marxists are the champions of industrialisation and reject only the distribution-system of the capitalist countries, but the Beats reject the industrialisation of a society in its entirety. For example, when Ginsberg says: "Your machinery is too much for me. You made me want to be a saint" [121] he is rejecting industrialisation it its entirety because he finds machinery, the very foundation of industrialisation, to be a cause of trouble.

The Beats refuse to be fettered by the social norms of the Christian ethical views and assert that one should not take things for granted but should explore new possibilities. For example, Gary Snyder observes in his essay 'Poetry and the Primitive: Notes on Poetry as an Ecological Survival Technique': "Those who have gone into their own natures deeply have, for several thousand years now, been reporting that we have nothing to fear if we are willing to train ourselves, to open up, explore and grow."[122] They also expose the weaknesses of the churchmen through associating them with activities which Christian doctrine regards as vicious. For instance, in *Visions of Cody* Kerouac uses the adjective 'vicious' for a priest;[123] in *The Town and the City* his character Mickey thinks:" 'The altar boys were sinners and hypocrites, he knew some of them, especially Mulrooney there in the back, so innocent-looking, who killed snakes along the river by frying them in tin cans, and blew up frogs with straws, and the blond boy Bailey who sold newspapers and hit Raymond one day in the school yard and made his nose bleed."[124] Ken too ridicules the Christian metaphysics in this novel and likens God to a carpenter when he says: "'... first there's God, and God bemuses himself and says 'Well, now let's see, I must make a perfect world, that's what I must.' So he makes men and

women and looks at them with that judicious air of a carpenter getting his boards and nails together.' "[125]

Gary Snyder too rejects the Christian philosophy when he declares in his poem 'Without': "... the end is,/ grace — case —/healing,/ not saving."[126] Rejecting the concept of saving means rejecting the Christian doctrine because Christianity stands for saving the sinners and Jesus Christ is regarded as a saviour of mankind.

The Beat Generation writers depict the life in the technologically advanced countries like America and Russia to be miserable. For instance, in the poem 'Paterson'[127] Ginesberg gives the portrait of an American who is eager to have money, moves between employment bureaus, magazine hallways, and statistical cubicles, enters wars, has his eyes and ears full of marijuana and goes on wandering between cities like Los Angeles, Denver and Chicago and has hot cars and garbage around him. The futility and dirt of his life comes to the reader's view. Then he turns his attention to the obscenity and sordidness with which the poem is replete. In the poem 'A Poem on America'[128] Ginsberg finds America and Russia to be similar so far as their technological advancements, class-consciousness of people, and the presence of the proletariat class are concerned. The poem makes it evident that if Russia is to be rejected, so is America. It is in the poem 'After Dead Souls' that he explicitly attacks it when he says:

> "Where O America are you
> going in your glorious
> automobile, careering
> down the highway
> toward what crash
> in the deep canyon
> of the Western Rockies,...."[129]

In the poem 'Two Boys Went Into a Dream Diner'[130] he depicts how hard physical workers have to work to earn their bread.[131] He wishes to bring back the conditions which prevailed in the world before industrialisation. And this wish finds projection in his poem, 'Written on Hotel Napkin: Chicago Futures' where he shows that Chicago will again become a city of windmills, thick-loamed gardens, cabbages, celery, cucumbers where horses will be grazing in parks and streets will be covered with grass.[132] Here windmills, horses, garden and grass are employed as the markers of the pre-industrialised world.

The Beat writers criticise the Establishment of America too. In the poem 'New York to San Fran' Ginsberg criticises America for the Vietnam war, especially when he says: "10,000 more US Troops to Vietnam/Adlai flopped dead of Heart Attack on sidewalk...."[133] He shows the Establishment to be bent on crushing dissent even by resorting to bombardment. In the poem *Ankor-Wat* he shows a writer not being able to publish his views out of fear. The persona describes himself as a fear-stricken person:

> "... jumped in the cab suddenly, afraid
> after left Xaloi Temple like a
> Negro disintegrated in New Orleans,
> afraid to publish that or they bomb
> my typesetters woodsey Balcony
> in Louisiana — ..."[134]

Ginsberg shows fear to be something widespread in this system and makes the writer say: "Everywhere it's the fear I get in my own/intestines — ...."[135] In his poem 'Mugging' he, first, describes some manifestations of American civilisation like roads, garbage cans, fire escapes, giant cast iron plates, traffic light and buses and, then, narrates an incident in which some boys try to rob the

narrator of his money, but, finding none — as the poet has no money but poetry with him, leave him chanting 'Om Ah Hum.'[136] Here he gives the glimpse of the violence, and robbery that are widespread in some parts of the world. And in the second section of the poem he gives us a glimpse of "burned apartments half the long block, gutted cellars, hall-ways' charred beams/hanging over trash plaster mounded entrances, couches and bedspring rusty after sunset...."[137] In the poem 'Who Runs America?' he answers the question which titles the poem and asserts that it is oil, rather than a human being,[138] that runs America. In his 'History of the Jewish Socialist Party in America'[139] Ginsberg shows how the Establishment of America is out to crush the attempts to challenge it. Likewise, his poem 'A Crazy Spiritual' is a protest poem as the poet here criticises the Establishment of his America by bringing it into this poem as the Marshall and the Justice of the Supreme Court. The crowd represents the common people while the 'faithful youth with artificial legs'[140] represents the victim-prophet who has undergone the miseries of life and has also challenged the administrative system responsible for them.

Ginsberg finds the American mass-media misreporting facts and regards it as an instrument of indoctrination. He declares: "Recent history is the record of a vast conspiracy to impose one level of mechanical consciousness on mankind and exterminate all manifestations of that unique part of human sentience, identical in all men, which the individual shares with his Creator. The suppression of contemplative individuality is nearly complete.

"The only immediate historical data that we can know and act on are those fed on our senses through systems of mass communication."[141] In his long poem "T.V. Babies" he regards his countrymen as people fed on lies which have been widely circulated through the television. In the

poem 'New York to San Fran' he charges American Establishment to be responsible for the rise of communism in Russia and says: "It's you angry Hell Hounds/ who have created Stalin and/ his 15,000,000 murdered/ Slavic hysterics — ...."[142] In his poem 'America' he embodies his dislike of the American newspapers and says: "I haven't read the newspapers for months, every day somebody goes on trial for murder."[143] His distrust of what the T.V. of the country propagates also finds projection in this poem when he says that the T.V. gives the impression: "America you don't really want to go to war./ America it's them bad Russians/ Them Russians them Russians and the Chinamen. And them Russians."[144] In his poem 'Death on All Fronts' subtitled 'The Planet is Finished,' he shows the planet earth to be sweet but sick when he says: "A new moon looks down on our sick sweet planet...."[145] How materialism is driving America to misery is shown in 'Friday the Thirteenth' where he talks "Chicago Chicago Chicago Trials, screams, tears, Mace, Coal-gas, Mafia highways — old Massacres in suburb garages!"[146] and finds: "Sheer matter crackling, disintegrating back to void,/ Sunyata and Brahma undisturbed, Maya-cities blow up like Chinese firecrackers...."[147] His 'Eclogue' embodies the same view as in it he foretells:

> In a thousand years, if there's History
> America'll be remembered as a nasty little country
> full of Pricks, thorny hothouse rose
> Cultivated by the Yellow Gardeners.[148]

The poet is disturbed to find:

> Each day's paper more violent —
> War outright shameless bombs
> Indochina to Minneapolis—
> Knot in my belly to read between lines,

lies, beatings in jail —
Short breath on the couch —[149]

Ginsberg finds violence rampant in the world. In his poem 'Bayonne Turnpike to Tuscarora' he finds "[h]usbands ready to murder their wives at the drop of a hat-statistic"[150]; in 'Violence' he describes gangsters who "with bloody hands/ hustle after midnight to cut [his] throat from its beard."[151]; and in 'An Open Window on Chicago' he finds: "... bombshells crash on flesh / his flesh my flesh all the same."[152] In 'September on Jessore Road' he shows how millions of Bangla Desh people had to encounter misery on account of the atrocities in which the Pakistan Government indulged in 1971 and says: "A million are dead, the millions who can/ walk toward Calcutta from East Pakistan."[153] And in the following entry entitled 'Notes for Stotras to Kali's Statue of Liberty' in *Indian Journals* he enlists some of the people who are responsible for much political violence in the world: "Hitler with his mustache grown walrus-droop over his lip, Roosevelt with grey eyeballs; Stalin grinning, Mussolini with a broken Jaw, Artand big eared and toothless; the subtle body of Churchill's head transparent and babylike; an empty space for Truman, Mao Tse Tung and Chang Kai Shek shaking at the bottom of the chain, balls with eyes and nose jiggled in the Cosmic Dance;...."[154] The mocking tone of these descriptions of the political leaders is an expression of the writer's dislike for them.

Gary Snyder also describes the lives of poverty-stricken women who resort to immoral ways to earn their bread. He does it in his poem 'This Tokyo' where he shows how 'a shivering pair of girls' have to dyke each other for a show in order 'to buy their relatives/ [a] meal'.[155] The poem makes it evident that the Beats find squalor as much in the East as in the West and that they do not support

either the Western or the Eastern ways in their entirety. If in the poem 'For the West' Snyder finds signs of 'everlasting damanation'[156] in Europe, in the poem 'Mother of the Buddhas, Queen of Heaven, Mother of the sun; Marci [*sic*], Goddess of the Dawn' he describes the "warm filth" of an old sow.[157] In the poem 'The Late Snow and Lumber Strike of the Summer of Fifty-four' Snyder takes up the problems of industrial disputes and unemployment which often cause disturbances in the industrial societies. In this poem the lumber-workers are on strike and have gone a-fishing with the consequence that burners are cold. The narrator himself, a jobless man, hitches the coast-road in search of work but fails to find any work at all. He exclaims in a state of despair:

> I must turn and go back:
> caught on a snowpeak
> between heaven and earth
> And stand in lines in Seattle.
> Looking for work.[158]

And such a situation is inevitable in a social set-up in which an industrialist wishes to earn maximum possible profit, and pay as low wages as possible, while the worker goes on making efforts to do as little work as possible and trying to force the industrialist to pay him the highest possible wages. In a society where money matters, such mentalities are bound to exist unless people's morals are high. In the poem 'Smokey the Bear Sutra' Snyder calls America' a world of loveless knowledge'[159] and finds it to be a country of "the countless men oppressed by a civilisation/ that claims to save but only destroys; ...."[160] And in the piece 'Facts' he mentions:

> 2. The U.S. has 6% of the world's population; consumes 1/3 the energy annually consumed in the world.

3. The U.S. consumes 1/3 of the world's annual meat.
4. The top 1/5 of American population gets 45% of salary income, and owns about 77% of the total wealth. The top 1% owns 20 to 30% of personal wealth.[161]

The mentioning of these 'facts' evidences the fact that the poet is not happy with the situation prevailing in the world as it allows the U.S.A. to avail herself of the privilege of consuming much more than what she will get if a just system is established. He shows that a very small minority has much of the wealth of the country at its disposal. This fact signifies that the poet favours a redistribution of the national wealth on the principle of justice. This view has kinship with the concept "All men are created equal" included in the American declaration of her Independence and supports to view that no man has a right to subdue the other or the deprive one of what justly belongs to him. Gary Snyder is a champion of close co-operation between man and nature and rejects a civilisation in which man regards nature as his enemy. He expresses this view in his article "The Wilderness" included in his book *Turtle Island* when he says:

> There are many things in Western culture that are admirable. But a culture that alienates itself from the very ground of its own being — from the wilderness outside (that is to say, wild nature, the wild, self-contained, self-informing ecosystems) and from that wilderness, the wilderness within — is doomed to a very destructive behaviour, ultimately perhaps self-destructive behaviour.
>
> The West is not the only culture that carries

> these destructive seeds. China had effectively deforested itself by 1000 A.D. India had effectively deforested itself by 800 A.D. The soils of the Middle East were ruined even earlier. The forests that once covered the mountains of Yugoslavia were stripped to build the Roman fleet, and those mountains have looked like Utah ever since.[162]

The passage suggests that the poet finds the process of deforesting the land to be a self-destructive behaviour on man's part. He voices the feelings of trees which have been cut and burnt on a large scale basis in various parts of the world and comes out in support of trees to champion the cause of their preservation. In other words, he wishes man to befriend nature and to have harmonious relations with its objects. In his poem 'Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout' included in *Riprap, and Cold Mountain Poems* in which he embodies one of his moods when he thinks of heat succeeding rain, fir-cones and new files, drinks cold snow-water from a tin cup and observes the objects of nature so closely that he forgets what he read to his friends[163]. Snyder wishes to save even animals like deer, rabbits, chipmunks, snakes, dandelions, and lizards[164]. As a matter of fact, the ways of the people who call themselves civilised result in a large scale killing of animals. Snyder's poems suggest that he wishes to have a situation in which things are allowed to grow in their own ways and man is compassionate. The lines: "And he will protect those who love woods and rivers,/Gods and animals, hobos and madmen, prisoners and / sick people, musicians, playful women, and hopeful children"[165] make it evident. Such a view resembles the view held by Cooper's Deerslayer who is fascinated to see a landscape which has not been touched by human bands: "This is grand: —' Tis solemn: 'Tis an edication [sic] of itself to look upon! ... not a tree

disturbed even by red skin hand, as I can discover, but everything left in the ordering of the Lord to live and die according to his own designs and laws![166] Snyder pays no attention to the fact that the changes man has made in nature are the ones which the problem of adjustment and the needs of life compelled him to make. For example, he started making houses in order to protect himself from the sun, the winds and the rains: likewise if man cuts trees he also plants them and the machines he has invented are the outcome of his knowledge of the rules of nature. When in his poem "A stone Garden" he says: "And I that night prowled Tokyo like a bear/ Tracking the human future of intelligence and despair"[167] his words convey the meaning that intelligence will drive man to despair. Snyder describes nature in a way so as to make it attractive to the reader's senses. He does so, for example, in the lines:

> This grass does for a mattress
> The blue sky makes a good quilt.
> Happy with a stone underhead
> Let heaven and earth go about their changes.[168]

He advances an argument in support of his theory of close co-operation between man and nature in his article 'Four Changes' when he says: "Man is but a part of the fabric of life— dependent on the whole fabric for his very existence. As the most highly developed tool-using animal, he must recognise that the unknown evolutionary destinies of other life form are to be respected, and act as gentle steward of the earth's community of being. [169] Snyder also claims that "the great earth has food enough for everyone who loves her and trusts her;..."[170] This signifies the fact that he is not disturbed by the idea that if man goes back to the primitive ways and stops making use of technology in agriculture, he will encounter the problem of the shortage of food. But it is only one who pays no attention to the facts of life that

can make such a claim, as it is technology that has given man almost complete freedom from famines and so if technology goes, it will take the abundance of food grains too with it and the times when famines were frequent will come back.

Jack Kerouac has created a large number of characters who reject the ways of the Americans. For instance, Japhy in his novel *The Dharma Bums* is not able to reconcile himself to the ideals of the American ruling classes, and says: '... I am scared of all this American wealth, I am just an old bhikku and I got nothing to do with all this high standard of living, goddamit, I've been a poor guy all my life and I can't get used to some things.'"[171] Likewise, in his novel *The Town and the City* he creates Levinsky who finds the world to be a place of neurosis and condemns it in bitter terms: "All the neurosis and the restrictive morality and the scatological repressions and the suppressed aggressiveness has finally gained the upper hand on humanity—everyone is becoming a geek! Everyone feels like a Zombie, and somewhere at the end of the night, the great magician, the great Dracula-figure of modern disintegration and madness, the wise genius behind it all, the Devil if you will, is running the whole thing with his string of oaths and his hexes.'"[172] Since Peter agrees with him, the passage is to be taken to embody the author's view too. And in *Visions of Cody* he shows America to be the land" '[w]here ferret-faced hipsters who may be part-time ushers are also lush workers and half queer and hang around undetermined—where people wait, poor married couples sleep on each other's shoulders on worn brown benches while the nameless blowers and air conditioners and motors of America rumble in the dead night—where Negroes, so drunk, so raw, so tired, lean back cheeks on the hard arms of benches and sleep with pendent brown hands and pouting lips the same so they were in some

moonlit Alabama shack when they were little like Pic or some Janaica....'"[173]

Jack Kerouac depicts America as a place where the hitchhiking questers are wanted by the police, where one is not allowed to care for oneself, and where people are weeping and chewing their lips, and which is inhabited by lechers. He does it in the novel *Visions of Cody*, especially in passages like the following one: '... America, the word, the sound is the sound of my unhappiness, the pronunciation of my beat and stupid grief—my happiness has no such name as America, it has a more personal smaller more littering secret name—America is being wanted by the police,...'"[174] The novelist not only shows all this happening to his characters but also makes a character say it and does not care for the critical opinion that a literary artist should find an objective correlative to what he wishes to say rather than say it in a straightforward manner — a technique which a moral preacher employs. And the fact is an indication of the intensity of the Beats' disliking the ways of the Establishment of their country.

In this novel the rejection of the civilised life takes the form of deriding the ways of academicians when he writes: " 'He would talk in graduating tones until finally you couldn't bear him any more....'"[175] It is the use of the phrase 'graduating tone' that makes it evident that he is ridiculing the ways of academicians.

The way Ray Smith describes a park in *The Dharma Bums* makes it evident that Kerouac loves natural landscapes more than the ones cultivated by man:

> There were beautiful natural parks of serene oaks, all golden and green in the late afternoon, and many wild flowers. Once we saw a fawn standing at a nub of grass, staring at us with

> wonder. We came down off this meadow down deep into a redwood forest then up again, again so steeply that we were cursing and sweating in the dust. Trails are like that: You're floating along in a Shakespearean Arden paradise and expect to see nymphs and flute boys, then suddenly you are struggling in a hot broiling sun of hell in dust and nettles and poison oak ... just like life.[176]

The adjectives 'beautiful,' 'natural', 'serene', and 'golden' used in the first sentence in this passage make the attitude of the speaker evident that the landscape has aroused the feeling of affection in his heart. Ferlinghetti's love of freedom finds expression in his poem 'Junkman's obbligato' where he says he wishes to go to a land of freedom which he gives the name the 'isle of Manisfree'[177]. In this poem he also says that he wishes to "live the true blue simple life/ of wisdom and wonderment."[178] This island is a land

> where all things grow
> straight up
> aslant and singing
> in the yellow sun
> poppies out of cowpods
> thinking angel out of turds.[179]

Ferlinghetti is sympathetic towards everything as he wishes *all* things to grow straight up rather than only the desirables. In other words all things in the universe are significant for him and he wishes to remove not even one of them. No doubt, all things have their respective places in the universe but they have to be taken from one place to another so that they may be used in the best possible manner. And if one accepts this much, what follows by implication is that the growth of things has to be properly controlled and guided.

If a farmer allows everything to grow in his field, he cannot have the desired crop in it and if he has to have the desired crop, the other plants have to be removed. If one accepts Ferlinghetti's view, the whole agricultural activity will come to its end. Ferlinghetti's view implies that he stands for a social order in which every man, animal and plant has full opportunities for his or its development. But one man's freedom may become another man's slavery, and in order to let a slave get freedom, it becomes essential to restrict his master's freedom. No doubt, Ferlinghetti's is a pious quest for an order which ensures full freedom to everyone, but a liar and a truthful man cannot and should not be treated alike. A man who wishes to support the desirable thing exclusively has to remain just, favour truth and condemn falsehood in unequivocal terms. One who treats both the enlightened and the unenlightened, the just and the unjust, the truthful and the false alike and gives them absolute freedom to indulge in any kind of activity will soon find oneself in misery.

But the Beats' criticism of the Establishment of America should not be taken to signify that they are the critics of America as a whole. The fact remains that they champion the cause of Americanism and the American dream. Here the term 'Americanism' is being used in the sense of love for individual spiritual liberty, and the upholding of the full blooming of every man's individuality. Unless one makes a distinction between the Establishment of America and Americanism, one will fail to analyse what the Beats like and dislike. Once an interviewer did not make a distinction of this kind and asked Ginsberg why he chose as his Preface to *Fall of America* a selection from Whitman's *Democratic Vistas* and opined that it seemed ironic; then Ginsberg replied: " 'Except that it does point to a goal and an ideal and a human potentiality that America was supposed to fulfill [*sic*] because that was the prophecy, the

need, and the psychological condition of American democracy, and Whitman named it and particularised it very clearly in that passage. Also it gives cadence, historical background, and traditional justification to my own adhesive poems.'"[180] This makes it obvious that Ginsberg criticises the present day America in the light of what American democracy was supposed to give to the people and that he does not criticise the American dream or the spirit called Americanism.

The relation in which the Beats stand to the modern civilisation takes a concrete shape in Ginsberg's poem 'We Rise on Sun Beams and Fall in the Night.' Here the poet talks of trucks and buildings and shows himself looking at the sun rising in the vast white sky:

> trucks sixwheeled steady rolling overpass
> beside New York — I am here
> tiny under sun rising in vast white sky, staring
> thru skeleton new buildings,
> with pen in hand awake...."[181]

The roads, trucks and buildings symbolise the modern civilisation, while the sun stands for the ideal for which the Beats stand and the poet himself represents the upholders of that ideal.

In his poem 'A Supermarket in California' too Ginsberg embodies his desire to have the 'lost America of love' back when he talks of it to the spirit of Walt Whitman:

> Will we stroll dreaming of the lost America of love past blue automobiles in driveways, home to our silent cottage? Ah, dear father, graybeard, lonely old courage-teacher, what American did you have when Charon quit poling his ferry and you got out on a smoking bank and stood

> watching the boat disappear on the black waters
> of Lethe?[182]

The lines make it evident that Ginsberg is disturbed to find that the America in which he is living is different from the America of his dreams. From this point of view he can be put side by side with the visionaries who have been in abundance in America since the early part of the nineteenth century, as John T. Reid points out: "The United States in the first part of the nineteenth century was a happy hunting ground for utopian idealists, confident in their altruistic search for a perfect social order and a harmonious personal life. From its first days, America had been a laboratory for idealistic experiments. The Pilgrim Fathers, the Quaker William Penn, and scores of other visionaries sought in the New World a proving ground for new modes of the perfect life."[183] And like these dreamers and experimentalists Ginsberg too wishes to have an America of his own dreams.

A Beat writer is typically American in spirit. "The American", writes Michel-Guilleume St. Jean de Crevacoeur in one of his letters entitled 'What is an American', is a new man, who acts upon new principles; he must therefore entertain new ideas, and form new opinions.... As Christians, religion curbs them not in their opinions: the general indulgence leaves everyone to think for themselves in spiritual matters...."[184] Secondly, Americans have love for religion and holiness for which George Alsop calls them 'pretenders to Holiness' when he writes in his essay 'Of the Government of Natural Disposition of the People' while talking about the Province of Mary-Land: "One great part of the Inhabitants of this Province are desiredly Zealous, great pretenders to Holiness; where anything appears that carries on the Frontispiece of its Effigies the stamp of Religion, though fundamentally never so imperfect, they are suddenly taken with it, and out of an eager desire to

any thing that's new, not weighing the sure matter in the Ballonce *[sic]* of Reason, are very apt to be catcht *[sic]*."[185] The Beats too love new things and pretend to be holy. In order to support this assertion one can take the help of the following passages, one of which is written by Gregory Corso and the other by Allen Ginsberg: Gregory Corso writes in his poem "Marriage":

> All going to do the same thing tonight
> The indifferent clerk he knowing what man going to happen
> The lobby sombies they knowing what
> The whistling elevator man he knowing
> The winking bellboy knowing
> Every body knowing: I'd be almost inclined not to do anything![186]

and Allen Ginsberg writes in his poem 'America': "America how can I write a holy litany in your silly mood?"[187] In the first passage the speaker decides not to behave in a particular way because he is expected to behave in a particular way and then he declares he will do nothing at all, and in the second passage Ginsberg declares that he wishes to write holy litany but finds the mood of America not favourable for that.

Love of experimentation is another characteristic of the American character as Mark Strand observes: "... experimentation is secure in America — so secure that it has become a new academicism...."[188] In this respect, Beats are the writers in whom Americanism finds its manifestation in their love of experiments, novelty and freedom, and whose dissent is directed against the Establishment of America rather than the American spirit.

The Beats also depict characters who try to understand

the universe in the framework of oriental philosophies like Buddhism, Zen Buddhism and Tantra. For instance in Kerouac's novel *The Dharma Bums* Ray records his views about the teachings of Gautama Buddha when he narrates an incident: "'... I warned him at once I didn't give a goddamn about the mythology and all the names and national flavours of Buddhism, but was just interested in the first of Sakyamuni's four noble truths, *All life is suffering.* And to an extent interested in the third, *The suppression of suffering can be achieved,* which I didn't quite believe was possible then. (I hadn't yet digested the Lankavatara Scripture which eventually shows you that there's nothing in the world but the mind itself, and therefore all's possible including suppression of suffering.)"[189] In this novel there are discussions on Zen ethics, in one of which Japhy contends that " 'Zen Buddhism didn't concentrate on kindness so much as on confusing the intellect to make it perceive the illusion of all sources of things'."[190] He says to Japhy, "All those Zen Masters throwing young kids in the mud because they can't answer their silly word questions.' "[191] And Japhy replies, " '...that's because they want them to realise mud is better than words, boy.' " [192] Likewise their characters talk about oriental concepts like *satori, nirvana,* and *yoga* [193] and this fact gives the impression that they are struggling to understand metaphysical questions through oriental metaphysical investigations.

They also admire the oriental countries, especially India. For instance, Kerouac calls India "`the great subcontinent,'"Benaras, "`The Capital of the World,' "and Indians" `the source of mankind and the fathers of it.'[194] He calls the earth itself "an Indian thing."[195] Allen Ginsberg's poems are interspersed with the worship of God or theology. For example, in `Beginning of A Poem of These States' he prays to Lord Shiva when he says: *"Hari Om Namu Shivaye"*[196]

But what is still more noticeable is the fact that their characters are not able to escape the sordidness of life and harbour profanities in their minds. Even a confession to this effect has been made by Allen Ginsberg in the following lines:

> All spiritual facts I realise
> are true but I never escape
> the feeling of being closed in
> and the sordidness of self....[197]

Drugs, sensual activities and profanities bring their characters close to the Indian *Vaam Maargi* thinkers (or left-hand pathists) of India who tried to attain occult powers through drinking wine, eating flesh, sensual activities, worship-postures and the chanting of sentences which they believed to be sacred.[198] Thus by drawing concepts from different cultures the Beats have produced the literature which crosses geographical boundaries in its philosophical sources and gives the reader a glimpse of what form world literature can have.

Norman Podhoretz does not like to take Beats seriously and calls them "know-nothing bohemians."[199] This appears to be so when one identifies a Beat writer with a character like Dean Moriarty in Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*. Dean Moriarty, no doubt, behaves like a bohemian as he tries to escape the miseries of life with the help of delinquency, lechery, drugs, theft and mobility. But since Dean's efforts do not bring him any happiness and cause him troubles, the author cannot be regarded as approving of his behaviour. On the contrary, Sal's not liking Dean's ways and trying to convince Dean to discontinue leading a wanderer's life suggest that the novelist wrote *On the Road* to show the undesirability of the ways of the bohemians like Dean.

Russian critics like D. Zhukov, D. Urnov and Miss Levidova find some redeeming features in the behaviour of the Beats.[200] According to them the Beats have revolted against conformism and the American way of life and their heroes are bohemians with roots both in the intelligentsia and *Lumpenproletariat* as they suffer "only frustration and spiritual emptiness," rather than "the torments of hunger, cold or unemployment."[201] But these critics too identify the Beat writers with their characters, which implies that they regard the Beat literary works to be their efforts to justify their ways. In fact, it is wrong to identify a writer with his characters. The writer simply expresses his views regarding human life through his characters. Through his characters he shows what, according to him, brings misery in life, what brings happiness and what action arouses what kind of reaction in this universe. In fact, *On the Road* should not be regarded as a novel written to justify the ways of Dean Moriarty directly and the Beats indirectly. It is an embodiment of Kerouac's views on human life and it should be studied as such. In the novel Dean has nothing but miseries to face in life and even his close associate Sal Paradise finds faults with his behaviour. This fact has to be kept in mind while interpreting the novel. And if it is done one will have to come to the conclusion that Kerouac rejects bohemianism in this novel.

Some literary compositions of the Beats make it evident that they are pacifists and regard a war as an undesirable thing and a bringer of horrors. Such ideas are embodied in the works of Gary Snyder, Ginsberg, Kerouac and Kenneth Rexroth. Ginsberg's poem 'Ankor-Wat' is an anti-war poem as here the poet takes up the South-east Asian conflicts for treatment and talks of writing letters to various heads of states:

To write a letter to President Norodom Shihanouk

to live in the flower-jazz palace at Pnome-Penh
Kingly neutrality enter China for U.P.
from Hong-Kong
write to Eisenhower, politely inquiring
get China off the hook
war of races not Marxism in....[202]

Kerouac's anti-war attitude finds projection in his novel *The Town and the City*. Here war has been depicted as an event bringing disintegration to the Martin family as to the rest of the country: the parents have to leave their town and go to the city, and the sons are driven to various parts of the world. Francis, one of the sons, finds the army-discipline too much for him and prefers being considered a lunatic and be discharged to remaining in the army. It is Francis who exposes the tall claims of the warring countries claiming to be fighting for democracy or against fascism, though their own ways, particularly in the army, are dictatorial: " 'Well then', continued prancis, 'I've been wandering how you yourself, as a liberal, can reconcile your enlightened views with the system of military disciplines that are built up in the armed forces. You have got to admit that the absolute relationship between officers and enlisted men is a fascist set-up. No one can deny *that* any more than you can deny that it's precisely such a system we're supposed to be wiping out.'"[203] Kerouac shows that a large-scale disturbance is created by a war and makes his narrator say: "It seems as though a whole nation of men and women are beginning to wander with war. They traveled [*sic*] on trains and busses [*sic*] and their familiar unknown faces were suddenly everywhere. In far-away towns where eleven o'clock had once been silence and the swish of treeheaves and the sleepy rush of Pinefork, Creek, and the echoing howl of the Eleven-O-Two, now it was the crowd of warworkers [*sic*] hurrying for the busses

[*sic*] and the midnight swift at the vast swooping sheds three miles out of town."[204] It is the anti-war attitude of the novelist which finds expression in the following lines of the novel: "'The world was mad with war and history. It made great steel ships that could plow [*sic*] the man, and then made greater torpedoes to sink the selfsame struggling ship.'"[205] Likewise, in his poem 'Moon Festival' Kenneth Rexroth shows that fighting is unnatural. He does it by, first, describing the beauty of a moonlit night in the lines: "The brilliant/Moonlight shines on the crowds."[206] and then observing.

> I know that the century is
> Overrun with war. The moonlight
> Means nothing to the soldiers
> camped in the western deserts.[207]

As a matter of fact, the horrors of war these writers talk about and the time when this movement emerged are sufficient grounds for one to infer that this movement was given rise to by the horrors which accompanied the Second World War just as the horrors of the First World War had given rise to the Dada Movement in Europe.[208] They are right in rejecting fighting as it is not the best method to achieve an end. Civilised people—if they deserve to be called civilised — use their intellectual energy to persuade their adversaries to come to reason and to do the right thing.

Road-life of the characters is also the favourite theme of the Beats and their works are replete with the descriptions of road-journeys, air-journeys and water-journeys and also those of the ways of vehicles. In his poem 'Bayon Turnpike to Tuscarora' Allen Ginsberg writes of the roaring truck-wheels when he says: "Truck wheels roaring forward spinning past the garbagedump/ Gas smell wafting thru

Rahway overpass...."[209] Likewise, in his poems included in the groups 'Thru the Vortex West Coast to East 1965-1966', 'Zigzag Back Thru These States 1966-1967', 'Eclogues of these States 1969-1971' and 'Bixby Canyon to Jessore Road' of *The Fall of America*, he describes the road-experiences of his characters. Here are, for instance, the opening lines of 'Bayonne Entering NYC':

> Smog trucks mile after mile high wire
> Pylons trestled toward New York
> black multilane highway showered w/blue arc-
> lamps, city glare horizoning.
> Megalopolis with burning factories —
> Bayonne refineries behind Newark Hell-light
> truck trains passing trans-continental gas-lines,
> blinking safety signs KEEP AWAKE
> Giant giant giant transformers,
> electricity Stacks' glowing smoke—
> More Chimney fires than all Kansas in a mile[210]

Similar is the case with Kerouac's characters. In *On the Road* Kerouac records the journeys of Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty, the latter of whom has unquenchable passion for remaining on the road and going from one part of America to another. In *The Dharma Bums* the two Dharma-seekers go up and down the mountain and Japhy Ryder, at last, goes to Japan. In *Satori in Paris* Kerouac describes what the narrator finds on the roads of France. But it is San Francisco that Kerouac's Dean Moriarty loves most; when Dean comes to San Francisco he is moved to tears.[211] In Gary Snyder's *The Back Country* we have the descriptions of journeys through America, Japan and India.

Snyder stands for plurality in human life and rejects the theory of the rise and fall of civilisations. In his article

'Poetry and the Primitive: Notes on Poetry as an Ecological Survival Technique' he argues:

> The human race, as it immediately concerns us, has a vertical axis of about 40,000 years and at 1900 A D a horizonal [*sic*] spread of roughly 3000 different languages and 1000 different cultures. Every living creature and language is a result of countless cross fertilisations—not a "rise and fall" of civilisations, but more like a flowerlike periodic absorbing—blooming—bursting and scattering of seeds. Today we are aware as never before of the plurality of human life-styles and possibilities, while at the same time being tied, like an old silent movie, to a runaway locomotive rushing headlong towards a very similar catastrophe. Science, as far as it is capable of looking "on beauty bare" is on our side. Part of our being modern is the very fact of our awareness that we are one without beginnings—contemporary with all periods—members of all cultures. The needs of every social structure or custom are in the mind.[212]

The implication of the statement is that every life-style is equally good or bad. Such an approach is democratic as it implies the rejection of the view that some life-style is superior to some other one. The author ignores the fact that even though men have been behaving in various ways, the forces governing the universe do not approve of every way and punish him for adopting some of them. It is through the method of trial and error that man has been trying to discover what the forces governing the universe consider right and what they consider wrong. Nothing can be justified on the ground that other human beings are or have been be having in a particular manner because

human beings do not only what is desirable but also what is undesirable. Synder rejects civilisation itself and asserts: "Civilisation is so to speak a lack of faith, a human laziness, a willingness to accept the perceptions and decisions of others in place of your own—to be less than a full man."[213] But he does not pay attention to the fact that what we call civilisation is the name of the accumulated experiences of mankind and one cannot escape accepting the perceptions and decisions of others. As a matter of fact, it is a wise man who learns from other people's experiences and if one does not, one will have to face a lot of trouble, may be even lose his life. For example, a wise man will accept that snake-bite may cause a man's death, because if he does not do so and tries to undergo the experience of being bitten by a snake, he may not survive to avail himself of his experience.

Synder's refusal to learn from mankind's experience leads him further to reject some other ways of the civilised societies like monogamy when he asserts: "We begin to move away now, in this interesting spiral, from monogamy and monotheism."[214] Man has learnt from the experiences like those of Cleopatra, Antony, Helen, Paris, King Dashratha and King Ravana that monogamy is the beat form of man-woman relationship to ensure domestic peace. But Snyder wishes to go back to the uncivilised ways of the tribal people when he argues: "In the near future, I think it likely that the freedom of women and tribal spirit will make it likely that the freedom of women and tribal spirit will make it possible for us to formalise our marriage relationships in any way we please — as groups, or polygynously, as well as monogamously. I use the word 'formalise' only in the sense of make public and open the relationship, and to sacramentalise them; to see family as part of the diviner ecology. Because it is simpler, more natural, and breaks up tendencies toward property

accumulation by individual families, matrilineal descent seems ultimately indicated."[215] He hopes that man will soon go back to his uncivilised ways. But the history of mankind makes it evident that man has constantly been modifying his behaviour in the light of his experiences, and even though there have been set-backs and retreats, every next stop leads man to a better knowledge of the ways of the world. That is why it is impossible for man to go back to his primitive ways. Civilisation, as a matter of fact, is not something imposed from without, but the name of the lessons mankind has learnt from people's experiences in this universe. Even when the ways of another civilisation are imposed on a race, the latter in fact modifies its older ways in the light of the new ways. For example, Indians, on whom the British imposed their ways during their rule, only modified their old ways. However, this is true that the present so-called civilised ways involve killing and oppressing a large number of creatures.

The Beats admire one another a great deal. For example, in 'Introduction' to *Gasoline* by Gregory Corso Allen Ginsberg makes a tributary remark about Corso, namely, "He's probably the greatest poet in America, and he's starving in Europe."[216] Explaining his poetic qualities he says: "Corso is a great word-slinger, first naked sign of a poet, a scientific master of mad mouthfuls of language. He wants a surface hilarious with ellipses, jumps of the strangest phrasing picked off the streets of his mind like 'mad children of soda caps.'"[217] Likewise, Kerouac highly admires Corso and Ginsberg when he writes: "I think that Gregory Corso and Allen Ginsberg are the two best poets in America and that they can't be compared to each other. Gregory was [a] tough young kid from the Lower East side who rose like an angel over the rooftops and sang Italian songs, as sweet as Caruso and Sinatra, but in words. 'Sweet Milanese hills' brood in his Renaissance soul, evening is coming on the

hills. Amazing and beautiful Gregory Corso, the one and only Gregory the Herald. Read slowly and see."[218] And this amounts to praising oneself because they are the writers of one and the same school. One who believes that a good literary word should have in it prayers to God, normal preachings and the deeds of virtuous people—a view embodied in the following two sentences of the *Rgveda:* "May the Muse in her three forms, that is, Ila, who comes into action while praying to God. Saraswati, who gives us moral instructions, and Mahi, who is concerned with the actions of great persons, enlighten the hearts of all as she is free from violence, gives pleasure and imparts divine virtues,"[219] and the following statement of Gautama Buddha

> *mase mase sahassena yo yajetha satam samam*
> *ekam ca bhavitattanam muhuttam api pujaye*
> *sa yeva pujana seyyo yam ca vassasatam hutam*

which means: "On the one hand a man month after month for a hundred years sacrifices with a thousand (sacrifices), on the other hand he but for one moment pays homage to a man whose self is grounded in knowledge, better is that homage than that is sacrificed for a hundred years,"[220] will also find the works of the Beats of significance as being the studies of questers they will enable a man who has adapted himself to the official sense of right and wrong to see how far he has absorbed himself in the system of which he is a part. A man who segregates himself from his fellow men is like a man in the space who can see from a distance what the earth looks like while a man standing on the ground is unable to do so. Snyder goes to the extent of declaring that every subject can be taken up for treatment in a literary work if it catches a poet's heart, when he says: "The voice of inspiration as an 'other' has long been known in the West as the Muse. Widely speaking, the muse is anything other that touches you and moves you. Be it a mountain

range, a band of people, the morning star, or a diesel generator."[221] If a literary writer is writing about the facts of life ignorance of which may lead a man to trouble, he is rendering an important service to the reading public.

The Beats believe that literature has a religious function to perform. Kerouac states this belief in his novel *Satori in Paris* when he observes that literature is "the tale that's told for companionship and to teach something religious, of religious reverence, about real life, in this real world which literature should (and here does) reflect."[222] Allen Ginsberg also believes in this view and the fact is evidenced by his statement: "Poet is Priest,"[223] in his poem 'Death to Van Gogh's Bar'. Synder too regards poetry as the embodiment of 'rare and powerful states of mind' when he says: "Poetry is the skilled and inspired use of the voice and language to embody rare and powerful states of mind that are in immediate origin personal to the singer, but at deep levels common to all who listen."[224] Likewise, Lawrence Ferlinghetti calls a poet a superrealist in his poem 'A Coney Island of the Mind' when he says:

> ... he's the super realist
> who must perforce perceive
> taut truth
> before the taking of each stance or step
> in his supposed advance
> toward that still higher perch
> where Beauty stands and waits
> with gravity
> to start her death-defying leap....[225]

and, thus, regards him primarily as a perceiver of truth and shows that the consideration of beauty comes next as it is after he has perceived truth that he advances toward

beauty. In this very poem he compares a poet's technique with that of an acrobat and says that the like an acrobat the poet "climbs on rime/ to a high wire of his own making." These statements evidence the fact that the Beats regard literature as a means to discover and communicate the truth of life rather than as a means to entertain the reader.

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80. Allen Ginsberg, *Mind Breaths: Poems 1972-1977* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1978), p. 13.
81. Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: Viking, 1957 [1955]), p. 144.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
84. *Reality Sandwiches* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1970 [1963], Tenth Printing), p. 71.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
86. *Desolation Angels* (New York: Coward-MacCann, Inc, 1965 [19600], p. 67.
87. *Kaddish and other Poems 1958-1960* (San Francisco: City Lights Books 1970 [1961] eleventh printing), p. 64.
88. *Howl and Other Poems* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1959 [1956] 21st printings, p. 14.
89. *Ibid.*
90. Jack Kerouac, *Visions of Gerard and Tristessa* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1963 [1958]), p. 6.

91. Jack Kerouac, *Vision of Cody* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), pp. 295-296.
92. *The Gates of Wrath* (Bolinas: Grey Fox Press, 1972), p. 17.
93. Allen Ginsberg, "Press Contribution to Cuban Revolution", *Poetics of the New American Poetry*, eds. Donald M. Allen and Warren Tallman (New York: Grove Press, 1973), p. 337.
94. Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: Viking, 1957 [1955]), p. 153.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 182.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 177.
97. Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: Viking, 1957), pp. 208-209.
98. Jack Kerouac, *Vision of Cody* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), p. 381.
99. Jack Kerouac, *The Town and the City*, (New York: The Universal Library, 1950), p. 9.
100. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.
101. Jack Kerouac, *Visions of Gerard and Tristessa* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1963 [1958]), p. 50.
102. Jack Kerouac, *The Town and the City* (New York: The Universal Library, 1950), p. 398.
103. A. Ginsberg, "Press Contribution to Cuban Revolution", *Poetics of the New American Poetry*, eds. Donald N. Allen and Warren Tallman (New York: Grove Press, 1973), p. 337.
104. Ann Charters, *Jack Kerouac: A Biography* (San Francisco: Straight Arrow Book, 1973), p. 332.
105. "Letter from Kyoto", *The Beats: A Gold Medal Anthology* ed. Seymour Krim (Greenwich: Fawcett, 1963, [1960], second printing), p. 147.
106. Jack Green "Peyote", *The Beats*, ed. Seymour Krim (Greenwich: Fawcett, 1963 [1960]), pp. 106-107. Green uses very few punctuation-marks and no capitals in this article.
107. *Beyond the Gods: Buddhist and Taoist Mysticism* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1974), p. 17.
108. "The Only Rebellion Around", *A Casebook of the Beat*, ed. Thomas Parkinson (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell co. 1968 [1961] sixth printing), p. 233.

109. A. Ginsberg", *Howl and Other Poems* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1978 [1959] 29th printing), p. 9.
110. Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: Viking, 1957), p. 134.
111. Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: Viking, 1957), p. 253.
112. *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.
113. *Riprap and Gold Mountain Poems* (San Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation, 1976 [1958]), p. 12.
114. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
115. *Ibid.*
116. Ann Charters, *Kerouac: A Biography* (San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1973), pp. 114-15.
117. *The Dharma Bums* (New York: Viking, 1972 [1958]), p. 160.
118. Visions of Gerard and Tristessa (London: Andre Deutsch 1963 [1958]), pp. 135-36.
119. Gregory Corso, *Gasoline* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1968 [1958], p. 42.
120. Gary Snyder, *The Fudo Trilogy* (Berkeley: Shaman Drum, 1973), p. 8. (page-number not printed).
121. Allen Ginsberg, *Howl and Other Poems* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1978 [1956]), p. 31.
122. *Poetics of the New American Poetry*, eds. Donald M. Allen and Warren Tallman (New York: Grove Press, 1973), pp. 412-13.
123. *Visions of Cody* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), p. 30.
124. *The Town and the City* (New York: Universal Library, 1950), p. 178.
125. *Ibid.*, pp. 389-390.
126. Gary Snyder, *Turtle Island* (New York: New Directions, 1974 [1969]), p. 6.
127. *Empty Mirrors* (New York: Totem, 1961), pp. 39-40.
128. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
129. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
130. *Ibid.*
131. In this poem Ginsberg tells the story of two boys who are required to pay five dollars for what they have eaten. But they decide to work in place of making the payment. However, they work only for five minutes shovelling garbage into a

truck and then ask the diner-owner how long more they will be required to works or five dollars and the owner laughs at their not knowing the fact that a grown up worker gets ten dollars for a whole day's work of that kind.

132. *Mind Breaths* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1978), p. 57.
133. *Airplane Dreams* (Toronto: Anansi, 1966), p. 14.
134. *Ankor-Wat* (London: Fulcrum Press, 1968), p. 25 (page number not printed).
135. *Ibid.*
136. Allen Ginsberg, *Mind Breaths: Poems 1972-1977* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1978), pp. 49-51.
137. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
138. *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.
139. *Airplane Dreams: Compositions from Journals* (Toronto: The House of Anansi, 1968), pp. 1-3.
140. *Empty Mirrors* (New York: Totem, 1961), p. 20.
141. "Poetry Violence, and the Trembling Lambs", *The Poetics of the New American Poetry*, eds. Donald M. Allen and Warren Tallman (New York: Grove Press, 1973), p. 331.
142. *Airplane Dreams* (Toronto: Anansi, 1968), p. 19.
143. *The Contemporary American Poets: American Poetry since 1940*, ed. Mark Strand (New York and Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1969), p. 92.
144. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
145. *The Fall of America* (New York: City Lights, 1972), p. 131.
146. *Ibid.*, pp. 143-44.
147. *Ibid.*, pp. 144-45.
148. *Ibid.*, p. 147.
149. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
150. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
151. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
152. *The Fall of America* (New York: City Lights, 1972), p. 62.
153. *Ibid.*, p. 183.
154. *Indian Journals* (San Francisco: City Lights and Dave Haslewood, 1971 [1970]), p. 13.

155. *The Back Country* (New York: New Directions, 1968 [1957]), p. 75.
156. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
157. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
158. *Riprap, and Cold Mountain Poems* (San Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation, 1976 [1958], p. 3.
159. *The Fudo Trilogy* (Berkeley: Shaman Drum, 1973), p. 7. (page-number not printed).
160. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
161. *Turtle Island* (New York: New Directions, 1974 [1961]), p. 31.
162. *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.
163. *Riprap and Cold Mountain Poems* (San Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation, 1976 [1958]), p. 1.
164. *Fudo Trilogy* (Berkeley: Shaman Drum, 1973), p. 6.
165. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
166. James Fenimore Cooper, *The Deerslayer* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1964 [1941]), p. 21.
167. *Riprap and Cold Mountain Poems* (San Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation, 1976 [1958], p. 21.
168. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
169. *Turtle Island* (New York: New Directions, 194 [1969]), p. 91.
170. *The Fudo Trilogy* (Berkeley: Shaman Drum, 1973), p. 8. (page-number not printed).
171. The Dharma Bums (New York: Viking, 1972 [1958]), p. 95.
172. *The Town and the City* (New York: The Universal Library, Grosset and Dunlap, 1950), p. 370.
173. *Visions of Cody* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2973 [1950]), p. 91.
174. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
175. *Ibid.*, p. 184.
176. *The Dharma Bums* (New York: Viking, 1972 [1958]), p. 180.
177. Lawrence Ferlinghetti, *A Coney Island of the Mind* (New York: New Directions, 1958 [1955], thirteenth printing), p. 59.
178. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
179. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

180. John Tytell, "A Conversation with Allen Ginsberg", *Partisan Review*, XLI, 2 (1974), p. 255.

181. A Ginsberg, *Mind Breaths: Poems 1972-1977* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1978), p. 56.

182. *The Contemporary American Poets: American Poetry Since 1940.* ed. Mark Strand (New York and Cleveland: The World Health Publishing Company, 1969), p. 51.

183. *Indian Influences in American Literature and Thought* (New Delhi: Indian Council for Cultural Relations, 1965), p. 45.

184. *American Literature: Tradition and Innovation* Vol. I, eds. Harrison T. Meserole, Walter Sutton, and Brom Weber (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Health, 1969), pp. 129-30.

185. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

186. *The Contemporary American Poets: American Poetry Since 1940* (New York and Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1969), p. 53.

187. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

188. *Ibid.*, p. XXII.

189. Jack Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums* (New York: Viking, 1972, second printing [1958]), p. 12.

190. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

191. *Ibid.*

192. *Ibid.*

193. See Chapter III, IV and V of this book.

194. *On the Road* (New York: Viking, 1957 [1955]), pp. 280-281.

195. *Ibid.*

196. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

197. *Empty Mirror* (New York: Totem Press).

198. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* Vol. I (London: Allen, 1966 [1923]), pp. 278-285.

199. Norman Podhoretz "The Know-Nothing Bohemians", *A Casebook of the Beat*, ed. Thomas Parkinson (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co. 1968 [1961]), p. 233.

200. Walter Z. Laqueur, "Moscow Makes the Scene", *Reporter*, Vol XXIV, No. 1 (5 January 1961), pp. 39-42.

201. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

202. *Ankor-Wat* (London: Fulcrum Press, 1968), p. 12 (page-number not printed).

203. Jack Kerouac, *The Town and the City* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1950), p. 328.

204. *Ibid.*, p. 290.

205. *Ibid.*, P. 306.

206. *Naked Poetry*, eds. Stephen Berg and Rabbit Mezey (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs—Merrill, 1969), p. 3.

207. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

208. C.W.E. Bigsby writes in his book *Dada and Surrealism* (London: Methuen, 1972): "Dada emerged into a world which had already lost its secure faith in absolutes. Confronted with mechanical processes and biological determinism, the individual saw less and less scope for action. While growing industrialism seemed to indicate, in pragmatic terms at least, that the idea of progress was a reasonable premise, the political and social stresses which it released suggested fundamental anomie" (p. 23).

209. *The Fall of America: Poems of These States 1965-1970* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1972) the Pocket Poets Series No. 30, p. 55.

210. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

211. Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: Viking 1957 [1955]), p. 162.

212. *The Poetics of the New American Poetry*, eds. Donald. M. Allen and Warren Tallman (New York: Grove Press, 1973), p. 403.

213. Gary Snyder, "Poetry and the Primitive: Notes on Poetry as an Ecological Survival Technique", *The Poetics of the New American Poetry*, eds. Donald M. Allen and Warren Tallman (New York: Grove Press, 1973), p. 403.

214. *Ibid.*, p. 401.

215. *Ibid.*, pp: 414-15.

216. Gregory Carso, *Gosoline* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1968 [1958]), p. 10.

217. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

218. *Ibid.*, p. flap of the book.

219. The Sanskrit Text is *"Ila Saraswati Mahi tisro devirmayo bhuvah. Barhih sidantwasridhah"* (Rgveda, I, 1, 25, IX). The English version is based on Maharishi Dayananda's translation in *Rgveda: Bhasha*

Bhashya Prathama Bhai (New Delhi: Dayananda Sansthan, Samvat 2030), p. 18-19.

220. Gautama Buddha, *The Dhammapada*, ed. and trans. S. Radhakrishnan (Madras: Oxford University Press, 1974 [1959]), p. 95.

221. "Poetry and the Primitive: Notes on Poetry as an Ecological Survival Technique". *Poetics of the New American Poetry*, eds. Donald M. Allen and Warren Tallman (New York: Grove Press, 1973), p. 401.

222. Jack Kerouac, *Satori in Paris* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1967 [1966]), p. 10.

223. Allen Ginsberg, "Death to Van Gogh's Bar" *The Beats*, ed. Seymour Krim (Greenwich: Fawcett, 1963 [1960] second printing), p. 149.

224. Gary Snyder, "Poetry and the Primitive: Notes on Poetry as an Ecological Survival Technique", *Poetics of the New American Poetry*, ed. Donald M. Allen and Warren Tallman (New York: Grove Press, 1973), p. 395.

225. *New American Poetry: 1945-60* ed. Donald M. Allen (New York: Grove Press, 1960), p. 133.

226. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

2

The Buddhist Philosophy in the Beats

The fact that the Beats are influenced by the Buddhist philosophy has been hinted at by John Tytell and Ann Charters. John Tytell, for instance, observes: "For many of the Beat writers, Buddhism became a form of psychic ballast, and their study of various schools of Eastern thought became both a means of deconditioning themselves from Western habits of mind and feeling, and a way out of the morass of Self into which they had so strongly plunged."[1] He asserts that the beats accept the Buddhist emphasis on compassion, and the concepts of 'changeability of the universe', and the insubstantiality of all apparent sensory phenomena' and points out: "The Buddhist emphasis on sympathy and compassion for all sentient beings served to balance the Beats' vitriolic condemnation of American materialism. Impressed by the Buddhist concept of the insubstantiality of all apparent sensory phenomena, they learned how to simplify conditioned cravings and desires as Thoreau had a century earlier."[2] He also takes up the problem as to which aspects of Buddhism find projection in the works of the Beats. For instance, he observes that it is his ecstatic sense of Samadhi that Kerouac describes in *The Dharma Bums*[3], and it is the doctrine of 'Do Nothing' that "receives final confirmation" in *Desolation Angels*.[4] But he does not deal with the problems exhaustively and does

not show categorically which aspects of the philosophy of Budha have been projected in the literary works of the Beats, and where Beats have projected views which involve the violation of Buddhism. As a matter of fact, the problem as to where the Beats are anti-Buddhists is as vital as the one concerned with what they have borrowed from Buddhism. Tytell's finding Kerouac's ecstatic sense of Samadhi projected in *The Dharma Bums* is a case of finding too much meaning in the incidents *see infra*.

Ann Charters also takes up the problem in her book *Kerouac: A Biography* but without going into its details makes passing remarks like: "The poems in *San Francisco Blues* had traces of Jack's reading in Buddhist philosophy in the San Jose library the previous month, but only traces."[5] and: "Jack embraced the first law of Buddhism above all others, the statement that 'All life is suffering.' It seemed to him more succinct, more to the point, truer to his moods than the Biblical rhetoric of Christianity. It was as if the words had been written for him. His Buddhism was a tangled and personal matter, but its most immediate appeal to him was that it served as a defense [*sic*] and as a philosophic way of justifying his suffering to himself."[6] But Charters' concern is Kerouac's biography rather than a detailed analysis of Kerouac's works to show where Buddhism is projected in them.

However, the Buddhist views which find projection in the works of the Beats are the 'four noble truths', the momentariness of life, the concept of the Nirwana, the negation of the ego, the need of compassion and the attainment of enlightenment through meditation.

The literary works of the Beat writers evidence the fact that they have accepted the 'four noble truths' asserted by the Buddha. The first of these noble truths is that there is suffering in life. The Beats have taken up the theme of

suffering in a number of their works and have shown this world to be a home of misery by depicting various characters undergoing various kinds of troubles. Characters like Kerouac's Dean Moriarty in *On the Road* are usually on the run and find every place to be full of misery. Their running from place to place looks like their making hectic efforts to escape misery. Drugs, suicides and murders too, just like running, are shown to be the ways resorted to by characters to escape suffering. In Anatole Broyard's short story 'The Choice' suffering takes such a terrible form that the protagonist chooses to poison his father who knows that his son is asking him to take poison, yet he tries to disbelieve himself and to persuade himself that his son will not do such a thing. Here the son considers death to be preferable to undergoing the pain caused by cancer.

Ginsberg takes the theme of suffering in his poems like 'My Alba' and 'Sakyamuni Coming Out from the Mountain' collected in his book *Reality Sandwiches.* In 'My Alba' the speaker talks of the sufferings he has encountered in his life and the ways in which he has reacted to them. In 'Sakyamuni Coming Out From the Mountain' he talks of the pain that coming to life after death involves. Sakyamuni is made to realise that the world is a home of pain. It is in order to depict such a mood that the poet makes Sakyamuni a miserable man and describes him in the following way:

> He drags his bare feet
> out of a cave
> under a tree
> eye brows
> grown long with weeping....[8]

Here is an illustration of what Ginsberg says in the poem 'The Voice of Rock', namely,"... shadow changes into bone."[9] Just as T.S. Eliot advances the theory of "objective

correlative" in his essay on Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*, Ginsberg's is the theory of a shadow changing into a bone. The idea that there is suffering in the world is a shadow, as it is an abstract idea, but the shadow has been made a bone in the poem in the sense that here a man is shown undergoing misery too painful for him to bear without weeping.

In the poem 'A Meaningless Institution' Ginsberg gives a glimpse of the suffering humanity and shows how people find the miseries of life too hard for them to bear:

> I was given my bedding, and a bunk
> in an enormous ward.
> surrounded by hundreds of weeping,
> decaying men and women.
>
> I set on my bunk, three tiers up
> next to the ceiling,
> looking down the grey aisles.
> Old, crippled, dump people were
> bent over sewing.[10]

The weeping of the people is an indication of their feeling helpless. And the fact signifies that Ginsberg's characters are the defeated people who have come to realise that the miseries of life are unbearable to them and that they are different from Hardy's characters like Henchard and Tess who struggle to the end and remain unbent inspite of their defects. They are shown receiving no mercy inspite of their weeping and the fact signifies that Ginsberg does not believe God to be merciful.

In the poem 'Don't Grow Old' Ginsberg includes various questions and answers like:

Will my arms wither away?
Yes yr. [*sic*] arm hair will turn grey.
Will my knees grow weak and collapse?
Your knees will need crutches perhaps.[11]

Here the speaker is thinking over the hard fact that human body is not immortal and that it decays inspite of a man's efforts to save it. It was a realisation of this kind that aroused a feeling of asceticism in Gautama's heart and he decided to renounce the pleasures of the throne and the family life in order to find out the secrets of existence.[12] Ginsberg's showing the speaker undergoing the experience which Gautama underwent signifies his justifying the Buddhist approach to attain enlightenment. And the poet says so more explicitly in his 'Father Death Blues' which is a part of the poem 'Don't Grow Old' where he writes:

Buddha Death I wake with you
Dharma Death, your mind is true
Sangha Death, we'll work it through
Suffering is what was born
Ignorance made me forlorn
Tearful truths I cannot scorn.[13]

The poet's saying that he wakes with 'Buddha Death' signifies that he accepts the Buddhist teachings as a way to enlightenment. Likewise, his saying that ignorance made him forlorn implies that he rejects Christian teachings which regard knowledge to be a sin as they are based on the view that Adam and Eve's eating the fruit of knowledge caused their fall, as described in the *Bible*.[14]

Physical ailments too cause misery in some of Ginsberg's poems, For example, in the poem, 'Hospital Windows' he complains: "head pains fading back of the neck, right

eyebrow cheek mouth paralysed — from taking the wrong medicine, sweated too much in the forehead helpless...."[15]

Likewise, in the poem 'Returning to the Country for a Brief Visit' he complains of a 'bad leg'.[16] The sight of an ailing man along with those of an old man and a dead man aroused a feeling of renunciation in the heart of Gautama too. In the poem 'Hospital Windows' misery is caused by the ways of civilisation as it is the wrong medicine — a gift of civilisation — that paralyses the mouth. In the poem, 'Memory Gardens' too the poet finds life to be painful and wishes "to ease the pain of living".[17]

Ginsberg depicts misery in both the general and the individual forms. Misery is general in the poem 'The Terms in which I think of Reality' in which the whole life is derided for sordidness and scanty rewards of labour, especially in the lines:

> Man lives like the unhappy
> whore on River Street who
> in her Eternity gets only
> a couple of bucks and a lot
> of snide remarks in return
> for seeking physical love.[18]

But in the following poem Ginsberg embodies his personal desolation:

> I feel as if I am at a dead
> end and so I am finished.
> All spiritual facts I realise
> are true but I never escape
> the feeling of being closed in
> and the sordidness of self,

the futility of all that I
have seen and done and said.
May be if I continued things
would please me more but now
I have no hope and I am tired.[19]

These lines have taken Thomas F. Merrill to believe that Ginsberg is an existentialist and commenting on these lines he observes: "Not exultation, not the certitude of life that has found comfort in the evidence of things unseen, the mood is that of a spirit that has long been besieged by doubts and has experienced a face-to-face encounter with the enervating specter of despair. 'I am tired,' 'the poet says, and in this weariness that the words so clearly realise for us in the twentieth century to which we have assigned the name 'existential' "[20]. But if giving expression to one's tiresomeness alone can make a poet existential, poets like Shelley and Keats too should be called existentialist poets as they too have given expression to their tiresomeness in their poems like 'O World! O Life! O Time! 'and 'When I Have Fears' respectively. What Ginsberg shows here is the fact that suffering which is present everywhere has not spared the poet. It is in the poem 'Laughing Gas' that the poet says that sadness is omnipresent:

the sadness of birth
and death, the sadness of
changing from dream to dream
the constant farewell
of forms....[21]

Gary Snyder takes up the theme of widespread suffering in his poem 'A Stone Garden' and shows how it assumes the forms of old age, disease and death— the forms which Gautama found disturbing. He talks of death in the lines:

> And moving, moving, on through scenes and towns
> Weep for the crowds of man
> Like birds gone south for ever.[22]

The going south of birds for ever signifies people's having died.

However, the fact that in the following lines from 'Hospital Windows':

> Fresh warm breeze in the window, days' release
> from pain, ears float downside the ridge trestle
> and uncounted building-wall windows multiplied a mile
> deep into ash-delicate sky beguile
> my empty mind. A seagull passes alone wings
> spread silent over roofs.[23]

fresh breeze provides relief from pain, makes it evident that Ginsberg finds wild nature to be a source of healing to man.

Kerouac's novels are chiefly studies of suffering and in them the novelist takes up its various forms for treatment. Kerouac's Peter in the novel *The Town and the City* takes suffering as an integral part of the scheme of the universe. That is why he says: "... I couldn't alleviate the suffering without breaking up God's purpose in the whole thing.'"[24] As a matter of fact, it is suffering that makes man conscious of the fact that he has committed something undesirable. If suffering had not been there, a man would not have been able to discriminate good actions from the bad ones. The universe has been planned in such a manner that every fault is accompanied by suffering and every virtuous deed by a suitable reward. This is why suffering is an

integral part of the plan of the universe. If it ceases to exist one will have no way to distinguish the wrong deeds from the right ones. Alex, a character in this novel, feels disturbed to find people suffering under three kinds of troubles, namely, sickness, old age and death and he claims that these troubles move him more than they move any other man when he says:" '... no one in the world can feel the way I do when I see a crippled little boy, or a sick old woman, or someone dead in a coffin: Don't you see? The brotherhood of man appears to me in all its heart-breaking glory, and then everyday life suddenly doesn't mean anything any more: I Just see the soul of the whole world, nothing else.' "[25] As a matter of fact, by saying that all these pitiable sights move him, he only shows his ignorance. All suffering is caused by man's own misdeeds. So far as death is concerned, it should not cause any sorrow and one who is unhappy at somebody's death is certainly ignorant. That is why Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that one who is born must die and since death is inevitable, it is undesirable to be disturbed by it.[26] If a man is disturbed by death, he may as well be disturbed by air or the sky or the sun or the earth or his own breathing.

In the novel *The Visions of Gerard* Gerard and his family are shown to be destined to suffer terribly. The narrator says: "When Christmas Eve comes a few days later he's in bed, in the side room downstairs — His legs swell up, his breathing is difficult and painful — The house is chilled Aunt Louise sits at the kitchen table shaking her head — 'La peine, la peine, pain, pain always pain for the Duluozes — I know it when he was born— his father, his aunt, all his uncles, all invalids— all in pain— Suffering and pain —I tell you, Emil, we havent [*sic*] been blessed by Chance.' "[27] Kerouac does not explain why these people suffer and the fact implies that he finds the world to be full of pain but fails to explain why people suffer. This signifies that he

regards suffering to be there in the world for its own sake. Kerouac shows what Gerard feels before finding himself undergoing physical trouble and the effect this trouble has on his psychology: he "sees millions of white dots, like, and in another instant his legs are stabbing again"[28] and then he begins to feel that "God doesnt [*sic*] look like he made the world for people...."[29] The qualities the novelist attributes to Gerard evidence the fact that this boy is extraordinarily virtuous: he loves even animals and tries to keep evil thought out of his mind. The narrator looks upon him as a Buddhist teacher and says: "I see there in the eyes of Gerard the very diamond kindness and patient humility of the Brotherhood Ideal propounded from after down the eternal corridors of Buddhahood and Compassionate Sanctity, in Nirmana (appearance) Kaya (form)—."[30] He feels pity even for a mouse caught in a trap.[31] He can feel the iron snap grinding his little imagined birdy bones and squeezing and cracking and pressing harder unto worse—than-death the bleak-in-life—."[32] But inspite of all this Gerard has to undergo pain. The fact suggests that Kerouac finds no explanation of the sufferings in the Karma theory which is based on the belief that pain follows evil thoughts. Kerouac makes the young father in this novel think over the problem: " 'My father died drunk behind his stove — my mother died in her dishes and poor wash clothes— father and mother, it happens to all of us one way or the other, we can pray if we want but it wont [*sic*] help — Go on, god wont [*sic*] call yourself God in my face—Doin [*sic*] business under conditions like that, we'll never win —'"[33] But the father is not able to find out what lies behind the sufferings the family has been undergoing. What is more remarkable is the fact that he depicts his characters to be helpless in force of suffering and he shows that there is no way out, and this is responsible for the fact that the situation in his novels becomes pathetic.

In *Tristessa* it is Tristessa who explicitly posits her faith in the view that there is suffering in the universe when she says: "'I keep replying — hoping to teach her Number One of the Four Great Truths — Besides what could be Truer ?"[34] Kerouac shows the troubles of adjustment, which are a form of suffering. In case of Joan in *Visions of Cody* the problem is explained in the following way: "... I thought it was just a little on this side of cruel, I feel a twinge of sorriness for Joan, either because all this time she'd been suffering real horrors nevertheless as movie queen that I had no idea about, or, in the general materialism of Hollywood she is being maltreated as a star 'on the way out'...."[35] His Sal Paradise in *On the Road* finds life to be a sad affair and says: "'We lay on our backs, looking the ceiling and wondering what god had wrought when He made life so sad.'"[36] When the narrator in this novel talks of his troubles when he says: "I had just gotten over a serious illness that I won't bother to talk about, except that it had something to do with the miserably weary split up and my feeling that everything was dead.'"[37] He talks of two forms of suffering, namely physical ailments and the problem of the want of adjustment with his wife. In *Desolation Angels* he shows that a man's skin may be black or white, he is never free from suffering when the narrator says: "'And when Ma wakes up in the middle of the night and groans, my heart breaks— The bus goes blumping over back lots of shittown to go pick up one package in a dawn station. Groans everywhere, all the way to the back seats where black sufferers suffer no less because their skin is black. Yes, 'Freedom Riders' indeed, just because you've got 'white' skin and side in the front dont [*sic*] make you suffer less—.'"[38] Here Kerouac moves from the suffering of the mother to that of the other people, that is, from the suffering of an individual to the universal suffering and the fact signifies that for Kerouac an individual is a

specimen of what is happening in the whole universe. In the following lines of one of his untitled poems he finds not only human beings but also other animals to be in the grip of suffering and says:

> Life is sick
> Dogs cough
> Bees sail
> Birds hack
> Trees saw
> Woods cry
> Men die[39]

He finds even trees to be in the grip of suffering. In the poem 'The Thrashing Dove' he regards suffering as an eternal thing and writes:

> All the little doves'll die.
> As well as the Peekotoos — eels.
> — They'll bend chickens' necks back
> or [*sic*] barrels and slice at Somsara
> the world of eternal suffering with silver
> blades as thin as the ice in Peking[40]

Lawrence Ferlinghetti depicts how universal suffering is, in his poem 'A Coney Island of the Mind' especially when he writes:

> In Goya's greatest scenes we seem to see
> the people of the world
> exactly at the moment when
> they first attained the little of
> 'suffering humanity'
> They writhe upon the page
> in a varitable rage of adversity

Heaped up
groaning with babies and bayonets
under celment skies[41]

The poet finds people in a situation that the first impression people give is that they are encountering troubles and undergoing suffering. His talking of babies and bayonet shows that sufferings are caused by child-births and wars. In Gregory Corso's poem 'Vision of Rotterdam' it is the onlooker's despair that colours whatever he sees with the result that he finds everybody to be miserable:

I left the gugoyle city
And
Two suitcases filled with despair
arrived in Rotterdam
Rotterdam is dying again
steamers and tankers
unload an awful sight
May 1940 Stevedors lead forth a platoon of lukemia
Pleasure ships send metal voiced rats teeheeing a
propaganda of ruin
A cargo of screams deafens the tinhorn of feeble
war
Bombers overhead[42]

Here it is war that causes both suffering and despair. The presence of the bombers overhead suggests the impending danger of widespread destruction.

The second noble truth of Buddhism, namely, 'it is craving that causes suffering[43] [see *supra*] also finds projection in the works of the Beats. If the characters of the Beats, especially those who are shown undergoing various kinds of sufferings are studied, they, with a few exceptions, are

found to be given to various kinds of cravings including the sensual ones. Gerard in Kerouac's novel *The Visions of Gerard* is an innocent man, but in the novels like *On the Road, Visions of Cody* and *The Dharma Bums* the chief characters are given to sensuality. Dean Moriarty in *On the Road* is so much a slave of sensuality that he is a father of illegitimate children and indulges in wandering for sensual pleasures; Japhy Ryder in *The Dharma Bums* indulges in illicit love-making before leaving for the East. Kerouac makes a character say in *The Dharma Bums*: " '... lust was the direct cause of birth which was the direct cause of suffering and death and ... I regarded lust as offensive and cruel."[44] This statement is entirely in agreement with the following words of Gautama the Buddha: " 'The power of lust is great with men, and is to be feared withal; take then the bow of earnest perseverence, and the sharp arrow-point of wisdom.' "[45]

Jack in Kerouac's *Tristessa* is so lustful a character that he cannot free himself from lust inspite of knowing fully well that it is bad, and both the facts are evident from his following words: " 'I'm trying to remember my place and my position in eternity. I have sworn off lust for lust's sake — sworn off sexuality and inhibiting impulse — I want to enter the Holy Stream and be safe on my way to the other shore, but would as lief leave a kiss to Tristessa for her hark of my heart's sake.' "[46] The first half of the second sentence embodies the fact that he knows lust to be a bad thing but his remark about Tristessa expresses his being lustful. Gautama Buddha regarded lustfulness to be worse than losing one's eyes by getting them burnt with red-hot iron-bars and said: "'Better far with red-hot irons bore out both your eyes, than encourage in yourself sensual thoughts, or look upon a woman's form with lustful desires.' "[47] If this Jack is a quester, he is the one who is unable to save himself from the trap of Mara, the Evil

One[48] and fails to attain enlightenment as its consequence. And the fact makes it evident that the characters and incidents in this novel are the objective correlative of Gautama Buddha's views.

In *On the Road* it is Dean Moriarty who leads an irregular life and remains engaged in sensual activities and has nothing but suffering to face. In other words the incidents connected with him are an objective correlative of Buddha's view that lustfulness causes suffering. The portrayal of Dean Moriarty may lead a critic to say that Kerouac stands for sensuality. But it is wrong to regard a novelist's protagonists as his spokesmen. A critic who identifies the protagonists of a novelist with the novelist himself and regards their views as the novelist's views will be doing something leading him away from, rather than to, truth. As a matter of fact, a literary work is a study of life and in his literary compositions a literary writer shows that if a person of such and such a temperament behaves in such and such a manner in such and such a situation, the outcome will be of such and such kind. Thus, a literary artist studies life in concrete terms rather than in the abstract ones. It is in the light of this fact that a novelist's characters should be studied. In *On the Road* Dean Moriarty has no firm ground to stand on and always remains on the run. This novel is the study of a man whose behaviour is faulty and whose ways have driven him to such an insecure position. A literary writer moves from a view to the incidents and characters but a critic has to decode the literary artist's meaning and has to move from incidents and characters to the meaning; if the former moves from the meaning to the objective correlative, the latter has to move from the objective correlative to the meaning. Since Dean has nothing but rootlessness to his lot, his ways cannot be regarded as the ones approved by the novelist. Since Dean violates the path prescribed by the Buddha and faces suffering, his

creator is to be taken to be showing that violating the Buddha's ethical rules[49] causes suffering. However, admittedly this is not the best way of depicting the virtues of a philosophy; it would have been better if Kerouac had depicted a character adhering to the Buddha's teachings and attaining Nirwana. That would have been a positive approach to the problem. No doubt, it is essential to show as to what is undesirable, it is also essential to show as to what is desirable.

The *Time* reviewer, while commenting on Kerouac's novel *The Subterraneans*, commits the mistake of identifying the author with the characters he depicts. He observes: "*The Subterraneans*, in its tawdry, slapdash way, testifies to one of Kierkegaard's precepts: 'Life is not a problem to be solved but a reality to be experienced.'"[50] And his inference is an example of how incidents of a novel can be carried too far in support of one's own views. If a novelist depicts the life of misfits in a novel, it does not mean he approves of that kind of life, though at the same time, it does not mean he disapproves of it. In fact, the novelist shows a few characters behaving in a particular manner and through the outcomes of their behaviour suggests what in that behaviour he finds worth-approving and what otherwise. Being a misfit is neither good nor bad. A misfit may reject either truthfulness or falsehood. One who rejects social norms for truthfulness, does a desirable thing, but the man who rejects these norms in favour of falsehood, does the undesirable thing. Gandhi was a misfit for the Whites, when he lived in Africa and later on came to India, but his being so was desirable because he was so for the sake of truth and justice. Similar was the case with Jesus and Socrates. But Satan was a misfit in Milton's heaven and God had to drive him out, but since he turned out to be a champion of deceit and guile, rather than of truth and honesty, his misfitness is an indication of the fact that he

was an undesirable person. It is bad to fit oneself in the community formed by the sons of Belial.

In *The Visions of Cody* a large number of evils of the world are talked about. The behaviour of lusty people, the visit of a terrible storm, the sending of people to jails are some of the things talked about therein. They give the impression of the scenes of evil visiting a man's consciousness when he is engaged in meditation.[51]

Right action is the first step of the eightfold path suggested by the Buddha. The first question that one has to answer is, how to distinguish the right from the wrong. If one fails to do so and confuses the two, as Shakespeare's Hamlet does when he says: " '... there's nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so' "[52] one cannot avoid encountering misery. In Jack Kerouac's novels too characters fail to follow the path of righteousness and face misery. His Jack confesses in *Visions of Cody*: " '... I've thrown empty whiskey bottles clear over the trees in Maryland copses on soft nights when Roosevelt was President; I've knocked down fifths in trans-state trucks as the Wyo-road unreeled; I've jammed home shots of whiskey on Sixth Avenue, in Frisco, in the Londons of the prime, in Florida, in L.A. I've made Soup my chaser in forty-seven states; I've passed off the back of cabooses, Mexican buses and bows of ships in midwinter tempests....' "[53] Likewise, Cody leads a licentious life, and steals a number of cars. And they find their lives to be full of confusion. Cody runs away from responsibility too, but Jack is cautions enough not to go to that extent. And the consequence is that Jack survives him and has an opportunity to analyse Cody's life in order to learn what life is. The novel is a record of meditative reactions of Jack and this meditation brings him to realise that Cody's death was caused by his indulging in undesirable ways. Gautama the Buddha derided

sensuality in unambiguous terms when he said: " 'Sensuality is enervating; the self-indulgent man is a slave to his passions, and pleasure-seeking is degrading and vulgar.' "[54]

In Ginsberg's poem 'Contest of Bards'[55] is embodied the view that in bards sensuality is degrading as it causes the fall of both the bards and drives the young bard to madness.[56] If the poem is examined superficially, attention is not paid to the consequences of the behaviour of the bards and conclusions are drawn from how they argue in favour of sensuality, one may interpret the poem to be a defence of sensuality. But if one pays attention to the consequences of their sensual behaviour, one realises that the poem embodies a rejection of sensuality.

The Beats also accept the Buddha's third noble truth, namely that the laying aside of craving brings happiness with it. They show their characters thinking over the problem as to how one can get rid of suffering. For instance, the narrator in Kerouac's *Desalation Angels* says: " 'The only thing to do is to be like my mother: patient, believing, careful, bleak, self-protective, glad for little favours, suspicious of great favours, beware of creeks bearing Fish, make your contact with God. For God is our Guardian Angel and this is a fact that's proven when proof exists no more' "[57] and tries to suggest how happiness can be gained. But this advice is not based on Buddhism. The advice based on Buddhism is embodied in the fifteenth of Gary Snyder's *Cold Mountain Poems* where he says: "But he always carries the sword of wisdom:/ He means to cut down senseless craving."[58] And expresses his disliking for craving by regarding a man's cutting down senseless craving as a mark of wisdom. In his poem 'Bubbe Greek Haircut', where he talks of "waiting a final flicker of desire/ To tote them out once more,"[59] he shows a flicker of desire toting things out. The statement suggests that the poet regards

desires to be something undesirable and this is a Buddhist view.[60]

Gautama Buddha believed in the wonderful potentialities of the human mind. He told a disciple: " 'Consider the abilities of thine own mind; thou wert [*sic*] born about two hundred leagues from here and canst thou not in thy thought, in an instant travel to thy native place and remember the details of they father's home? Seest thou not with thy mind's eye the roots of the tree which is shaken by the wind without being overthrown?' "[61] A character of Jack Kerouac too says: " 'Pray for the safety of the mind:...' "[62] The Beats do not show their characters attaining enlightenment through God's Word or any kind of revelation from outside. On the contrary, they show them attaining it through their own mental efforts which are given the name 'meditations'. Ginsberg shows how through meditation Sakyamuni attains enlightenment in his poem 'Sakyamuni Coming Out from the Mountain' when he says:

> Arhat
> Who sought Heaven
> under a mountain of stone,
> sat thinking
> till he realised
> the land of blessedness exists
> in the imagination—
> the flesh come:...[63]

Whatever be the view that the quester arrives at, it is arrived at through mental efforts. And the view is implied even in Buddha's first noble truth that there is suffering in the universe.

Another Buddhist concept which the Beats have accepted

is that nothing in this universe is static[64] and that everything goes on changing.[65] This is an anti-vedic view.[66]

Gautama Buddha is highly conscious of the fact that there is death in the universe and wishes people to try to seek light. In *Dhammapadu* he says: "Why is there laughter, why is there joy while this world is always burning? Why do you not seek a light, you who are shrouded in darkness? This body is worn out, a nest of diseases and very frail. This heap of corruption breaks to pieces, life indeed ends in death."[67] The same view is embodied in the following lines of Jack Kerouac from his book *Visions of Gerard*: "'Death is the other side of the same coin, we call now, life. ... The whole world has no reality, it's only imaginary, and what are we to do? — Nothing — nothing — nothing. Pray to be kind, wait to be patient, try to be fine.'"[68] In fact death is nothing more than a qualitative change in man's body, though quantitative changes take place in it every moment. And the body is only a tool which a soul uses so long as it finds it useful, but when it finds a body to have become no-more-usable, it leaves it and goes to another body.[69] In death there is nothing that should cause any kind of concern.

Jack Kerouac meditates over the problem of the momentariness of life in his poem entitled 'Sept.16, 1961, Poem' when he writes:

> Why should I put myself down? Which is a feeling just coming to go
>
> Everything comes and goes. How good it is!
>
> Evil wars won't stay for ever!
>
> Pleasant forms also go.
>
> Since everything just comes and goes why be sad or glad?

> Sick today healthy tomorrow. But O I'm just the same!
> Just coming and going all over the place,
> the place itself coming and going.[70]

Here the poet comes to a right conclusion that since everything changes, a man should be neither glad nor sad in face of any pleasures and troubles respectively in life. But what he has ignored is the fact that what a man encounters is the consequence of his won deeds and it is the consequences which enable him to distinguish correctly which of his actions are right and which are wrong. Gautama the Buddha does not ask a man to treat every deed to be equally good or bad, but through his teaching of the eightfold path [see *supra*]' wishes a man to distinguish the right action from the wrong one, the right speech from the wrong one, the right kind of livelihood from the wrong one, and the like. The first qualification of a right action is that it is truthful. Actions based on falsehood may bring immediate pleasure, but they cause misery in the long run just as actions based on truth may bring misery at the beginning but bear the fruits of pleasure in the long run. The fact may be illustrated by taking the example of King Lear's three daughters in Shakespeare's tragedy *King Lear*. Cordelia's plainness and truthfulness bring her loss of kingdom, as she is instantly disinherited by her father, but also win her not only the love but also the respect of the king of France; the other two daughters' falsehood gives them immediate prosperity, as they become the owners of their father's kingdom, but causes their faithlessness to their husbands, mutual rivalries and unnatural deaths, as one of them is poisoned to death and the other commits suicide before the play comes to its end.

The momentariness of life, for instance, is shown in a passage in Kerouac's novel *The Town and the City* through

the description of how fast things are changing and how easily perceptible the changes are: "... the sun was setting, leaving a huge swollen light like dark wine, and long sash-clouds the hues of velvet purple formed in apparitions above. Everything was changing, the river changing in a teeming of low colors to darkness, the abysses of the street to darkness and a ghost-glow of lights, the pyramid structures from hard purplish stone with serried carvings of windows to a fabulous thousand-starred glitter in black steep cliffs."[71] The fact is mentioned explicitly by Dean in *On the Road* when he says: " 'People change, they eat meals year after year and change with every meal.' "[72]

Allen Ginsberg too posits his faith in the theory of the momentariness of the universe. He writes in his poem 'Death to Van Gogh's Ear':

> Now is the time for prophecy without death as a consequence
> the universe will ultimately disappear
> Hollywood will rot on the windmills of Eternity
> Hollywood whose movies stick in the throat of God
> Yes Hollywood will get what it deserves[73]

But here too it is not absolute loss of hope, unlike what we have in Buddhism.[74] Since Hollywood, Ginsberg hopes, will get what it deserves, there is nothing to be sorry for, even if it disappears. Thus if the transitoriness of life makes Kerouac feel that there is no cause to be sad or glad, it gives Ginsberg consolation.

Gary Snyder, on the other hand, begins to feel that the phenomenon of the world is not significant because in his poem 'Coyote Valley Spring' he describes birds and weed as "shifting things"[75] and in the poem 'T - 2 Tanker Blues'

he talks of the transitoriness of things by describing mind and matter, love and space as frail things.[76] As a matter of fact, man is placed in a fast changing universe where he is required to work for the satisfaction of his needs and, while doing so, not to forget the difference between the right and the wrong because the consequence of doing a wrong thing is misery, while that of doing the right thing is happiness. However, one has also to distinguish between immediate pleasure followed by lasting pain, and immediate pain followed by lasting pleasure. In his poem 'A Stone Garden' too Snyder takes up this problem for meditation and holds:

> The cities rise and fall and rise again
> From storm and quake and fire and bomb,
> The glittering smelly ricefields bloom,
> And all that growing up and burning down
> Hangs in the Void a little knot of sound.[77]

The constant changes, rising and falling, and again rising of the cities makes the poet feel that all this is a little knot of sound that hangs in the Void, which implies that he finds all these changes to be of little significance, when he talks of the rising and falling of cities, he also talks of their rising again. It means he is not a pessimist and that he finds the universe to be moving in a circular manner rather than in a linear one. The Beats remind their readers of the momentariness of the universal phenomenon through frequently talking of death. Snyder finds a 'Liquid Metal Fast Breeder Reactor' look like death personified when he says in his poem 'LMFBR':

> Death himself
> (Liquid Metal Fast Breeder Reactor)
> stands grinning, beckoning.

Plutonium tooth-glow.
Eyebrows buzzing.
Strip-mining scythe.[78]

It is in the poem 'I Have Increased Power' that Ginsberg shows how horrifying life has become for him and depicts it to be a grim affair when he says:

As to knowledge of death:
and life itself as without
consummation forseeable
an ideal joy or passion:
... life as vile, as painful,
as wretched, (this pessimism
which was X's jewel)
as grin, not merely bleak:
the grimness of chance.[79]

Here the poet's sadness is caused by the knowledge of death and the wretchedness of life.

Death is shown causing sorrow in several forms in Ginsberg's poems. In the first of the 'Bop Lyrics' death arouses only fear because the speaker does not know what it is and says:

When I think of death
I get a goofy feeling;
Then I catch my breath:
Zero is appealing
Appearances are hazy
Smart went crazy[80]

Here it is ignorance that causes fear. In 'A Dream' death makes a terrifying appearance in a nightmare:

I stared in phantom — attic dark
At such radiant shapes of gloom,
I thought my fancy and mind's lark
So cried for Death that He had come.[81]

And in his poem 'In Memoriam' death is responsible for making life an illusory thing and the poet writes:

It's death that makes man's life a dream
and heaven's splendor but a wave;
light that falls into the sea
is swallowed in a starving cave.[82]

In one of the entries in his *Indian Journals* the poet feels death to be something invitable and advises himself: "Stop trying not to die/ fly where you can fly."[83]

Lawrence Ferlinghetti appears to be terribly death-conscious in his poem 'He' where the narrator utters the word 'death' twenty-nine times when he becomes aware of the fact that he will die. The poet describes the situation:

For he has come at the end of the world
and he is flippy flesh made word
and he speaks the word he hears in his flesh
and the word is *Death*....[84]

And so is the case with Gregory Corso in his book *Happy Birthday of Death.* In his poem 'Notes After Blacking Out' he believes poetry to be 'seeking the answer' and Death to be 'knowing the answer'.[85] He affirms his faith in nothingness when he writes:

There is nothing
Nothing ever was
Nothing is a house never bought

Nothing comes after this wildbright Joke
Nothing sits on nothing in a nothing of many
Nothings a nothing king.[86]

The poet has begun to feel that the entire universe is, ultimately, nothing.

Kerouac too posits his faith in nothingness in the 219th Chorus when he requests Dostoevski's saints to accept him and comes to the conclusion that saints do not exist, nor does anything else, not even 'no'!

Saints, accept no to the dream
of the faithful desire.
No me? No drama to desire?
No Alyosha, no Russia, no tears?
Good good good good, my saints
No saints? No no no my saints.
No no? No such thing no no.[87]

In the 115th Chorus in *Mexico City Blues* Kerouac finds life to be empty:

Got up and dressed up
    and went out and [*sic*] got laid
Then died and got buried
    in a coffin in the grave
Man—
    Yet everything is perfect,
Because it is empty
Because it is perfect
    with emptiness.
Because it's not even happening.[88]

Here the emptiness of life makes the poet happy.

Gautama, the Buddha, regarded himself as a healer or the medicine-man and told his disciples: "'Ye are my children, I am your father; through me have ye been released from your suffering.

"'I myself having reached the other shore, help others to cross the stream; I myself having attained salvation, am a saviour of others: being comforted, I comfort others and lead them to the place of refuge.'"[89] In his poem 'The Blue Sky' Gary Snyder calls Buddha the Master of Healing and the poem opens with the assertion:

> Eastward from here,
> beyond Buddha-worlds ten times as
> numerous as the sands of the Ganges
> there is a world called
> PURE AS LAPIS LAZULI
> its Buddha is called Master of Healing
> AZURE RADIANCE TATHAGATA[90]

Synder believes healing to be the end of a man's religious effort and says in his poem 'Without':

> ... the end is,
> grass — ease—
> healing,
> not saving.[91]

Gautama Buddha believed ignorance to be the root of evil. Explaining it Paul Carus observes: "Pondering on the origin of birth and death, the Enlightened One recognised that ignorance was the root of all evil; and these are the links in the development of life, called the twelve nidans...."[92] In Peter Kerouac presents a character who does not understand the world and says: ".'My philosophy is that you can't explain the world. It's too big and it's too crazy and

sometimes it's funny and most of the time it's. . . strange.'"[93] And the result is that this spiritual ignorance leads him to commit mistakes in his life and bring misery to his family. He is the cause of his father's loss of his job and finally the old man is compelled to leave his town and move towards a city in search of a means of livelihood.

In Ginsberg's poem *Ankor-Wat* Buddha is treated as God and the poet says:

> Buddha I take my refuge
> bowing in the black bower
> before the open handed lotus-man sat crosslegged[94].

Ginsberg makes no distinction between Buddha, Rama and Krishna when he says: "I am taking refuge in the Budha Dharma Sangha" while Chanting the names, Rama and Krishna.[95] Rama and Krishna are worshipped by the Vaishnavites as they are believed to be the avatars of Vishnu but the narrator's putting Buddha, Krishna and Rama together signifies the fact that he regards Buddha to be an avatar of the Ultimate Power. The significant fact is that he does it in a poem in which he shows the world to be facing various kinds of troubles including wars and diseases. His lines:

> Nandi and bull waiting her [*sic*] owner in the Sun
> The house crumbling and Vishnu's arms broken, heads off the seated
> statues
> bat families hanging upside down in the
> door beams' cracks—[96]

Nandi's waiting for the owner and not having him, and

Vishnu's losing arms symbolise the poet's rejecting the Shaiva and the Vaishnavite philosophies as Nandi is owned by Lord Shiva, the worshipped of the Shaivites, and Vishnu is worshipped by the Vaishnavites. Shiva's not coming and Vishnu's losing his arms show that the poet finds Shiva and Vishnu of no use to him and it is in such a state of mind that he has decided to join the Buddha Dharma Sangha.

The Beats posit their belief also in the Buddhist concept of Nirvana. In his poem 'Laughing Gas' Ginsberg says: "— but there is no changelessness / but in Nirvana."[97] And the characteristic of Nirvana, the lines make it evident, is that a man in that state attains changelessness. Kerouac's Ray Smith believes that nirvana is a state that one can attain after death. This is what is implied in his words addressed to Japhy: "'I think death is our reward. When we die we go straight to nirvana Heaven and that's that.'"[98] Snyder's view of nirvana is different. According to him nirvana can be attained during life if one's mind is open and complete, and is free from desires and lusts as is evident from his words in 'Bojang's Big Lecture': "If you are able to flow through life with a mind as open and complete ... then you will not be swept away and drowned by the skandhas, the five big desires and the eight lusts. Then the source of Birth - and - Death will be cut off, and you will go and come freely."[99] Explaining this state he further states: "You will not in the least be bound by the conditions of Karma. With an unfettered body you can shave your benefits with all things. With an unfettered mind you can respond to all minds."[100]

In his poem 'A Berry Feast' Snyder shows the apathy of the people towards Nirvana when he shows people engaged in eating and drinking: "Belly stretched taut in a bulge/... who wants Nirvana?"[101]

Here the love of life is being condemned and nirvana is being shown as the most desirable thing for a man. Explaining this view of Buddhism S. Radhakrishnan observes: "From clinging to existence comes becoming or bhava, which Candrakirti interprets as the Karma which brings about rebirth. From becoming comes birth, from birth come old age and death, pain and lamentation, sorrow, anxiety and despair."[102] Just as Wordsworth in his poem 'The World is Too Much With Us' expresses his displeasure to find that people were engaged in material pursuits and paid little attention to nature, in 'A Berry Feast' Snyder expresses his disgust with people's caring for their bellies but not for nirvana.

Compassion is one of the four moods cherished by the Buddhists. Referring to it S. Radhakrishnan observes: "We are asked to cherish the moods of loving-kindness (maitri), compassion (karuna), cheerfulness (mudita), and impartiality (upeksa). These are the four sublime moods or Brahma Viharas. They are the systematic attempts to make the sentiments of love, sympathy, etc., extend over ever- widening groups till the whole world of humanity, nay, of sentient beings is included."[103] The Beat writers too have written a lot in support of compassion. In *Desolation Angels*, for instance, Kerouac shows murdering to be an activity for which God punishes man. He does it in the passage: "And I realise we are all of us murderers, in previous lifetimes we murdered and we had to come back to work out our punishment, by punishment-under-death which is life, that in this lifetime we must *stop murdering* or be forced to come back because of our inherent God natures and divine magic power to manifest anything we want — I remembered my father's pity when he drowned baby mice himself one morning long ago, and my mother saying, 'Poor little things'—"[104]

Murdering is not forbidden in the philosophy, embodied in the *Gita* where Lord Krishna exhorts Arjuna to fight and says that He incarnates Himself again and again in order to defend the good and to kill the vicious.[105] This signifies that Krishna considers it a man's duty to punish the vicious, but since Kerouac treats every murder alike, his view resembles Buddha's view. By talking of the killing of baby mice, he arouses pity for the lower animals. The murder of a creature is pathetic, no doubt, but the murder of a baby is even more pathetic. And if it is the baby of such a timid creature as a mouse, the fact becomes much more pathetic.

Kerouac upholds the virtue of compassion by admiring the Buddhist saints and their compassionate pity in his poem 'The Buddhist Saints' when he says:

> The Buddhist saints are the incomparable saints
> Wooing continue of lovemilk, mewling
> And purling with lovely voices for love,
> For perfect compassionate pity
> Without making one false move of action,...[106]

Here his approach is positive and he shows how a man should behave. He also upholds the Buddhist view of life when he says:

> They know that life and death
> The knowing of life, muteness of death,
> Are mutual dual twin opposites
> Conceptioning on each side of the Truth
> Which is the pivot in the Center
> And which says: 'Neither life
> nor death—neither existence
> nor non-existence—but the central
> lapse and absence of them both."[107]

The view embodied here is one developed by later Buddhists whose belief is explained by S. Radhakrishnan in the following words: "Later Buddhists believe that all existence is momentary. Permanent existence, they argue, is a self-contradiction. Existence of sattva means practical efficiency, or arthakriyakaritva. Existence is the capacity to produce some change in the order of things. The seed exists since it produces shoots. Permanent things, however, cannot possess this power of producing changes. If things were uncharged in past, present and future, there would be no reason why they should produce different effects at different points of time."[108] It is difficult to explain how the consequences of one's Karma are reaped by one in one's subsequent lives unless it is accepted that there is the existence of the soul. Since Kerouac, like the Buddha, does not accept the existence of the soul, he has to use terms like 'neither life nor death' and 'neither existence nor non-existence'.

Compassion is upheld by Ray Smith in *The Dharma Bums* when he says: "'I felt great compassion for the trees because we were the same thing. . . .'"[109] He does the same thing when he says: "'I was very rich now, a super myriad trillionaire in Samapatti transcendental graces, because of good humble Karma, maybe because I had pitied the dog and forgiven man.'"[110] It is his upholding the value of compassion that is responsible for his condemning the practice of hunting in the words: "'But that don't [*sic*] mean I don't love America, by God, though I hate these damn hunters, all they wanta [*sic*] do is level a gun at a helpless sentient being and murder it, for every sentient being or living creature these actual pricks kill they will be reborn a thousand times to suffer the horrors of samsara and damn good for 'em too.'"[111]

Gary Snyder embodies the value of compassion in the

sixteenth poem of the section 'Hunting' of his book *Myths and Texts* when he says:

> Girls would have in their arms
> A wild gazelle or wild world — cubs
> And give them their white milk,
> those who had new-born infants home
> Breasts still full
> Wearing a spotted fawnskin
> sleeping under trees
> bacchantes, drunk
> On wine or truth, what you will,
> Meaning: compassion.[112]

Here the poet regards compassion as the meaning of truth. This statement is a very forceful upholding of the value of compassion. As a matter of fact, if one is compassionate towards vice, one is inimical towards virtue and being so is a deviation from the path of justice, because it is those who are in misery on account of their vicious deeds that are in need of compassion. Thus truthfulness and compassion do not go together. But Snyder has treated them as synonyms. In his poem 'Spel Against Demons' too Snyder regards compassion so much a desirable thing that he rejects indulgence in anger because it kills compassion when he says:

> The stifling self-indulgence in anger in the name of
> Freedom
> Must cease
> this is death to clarity
> death to compassion.[113]

As a matter of fact it is desirable to be angry with vice, but Snyder does not accept it to be so.

In the three poems included in *The Fudo Trilogy* too Snyder upholds the value of compassion. Here he shows that killing is widespread in the industrially advanced countries sometimes in the name of freedom and sometimes in the name of something else. In the first poem he suggests that it is the lack of compassion that has caused this trouble and in the third one he describes a utopia in which man and nature become companions. This view has been upheld by Snyder in his articles "Poetry and the Primitive: Notes On Poetry as an Ecological Survival Technique' when he observes: "Buddhist Tantrism, or Vajrayana as it's also known, is probably the finest and most modern statement of this ancient shamanistic-yogic-gnostic-socioeconomic view: that mankind's mother is Nature and Nature should be tenderly respected; that man's life and destiny is growth and enlightenment in self-disciplined freedom; that the divine has been made flesh and the flesh is divine; that we not only should but *do* love one another."[114]

The Beat writers also accept the Buddhist view of enlightenment which brings deliverance from suffering. In Kerouac's novel *Satori in Paris*, where the narrator goes to France in order to learn something about his ancestors and thus discover his roots in the past, his symbolic satori delivers him from the desire that was driving him from place to place. The novel is not simply an account of or a person's travels, it is an external form of the internal quest. And this attainment of enlightenment is the outcome of his own efforts rather than something attained with the help of a sacred book or the Word of God. Enlightenment is attained by Peter too in a similar manner and what he discovers to be a desirable thing is the Buddhistic attitude to life. The narrator says: "A sharp knowledge had now come to him of the tragic aloneness of existence and the need of bearing it of with love and devotion instead of surrendering to it with the perverse, cruel, unnecessary

self-infliction that he saw everywhere around him, that he himself had nursed for so long."[115] This is Gautama Buddha's Middle Path—explaining which S. Radhakrishnan observes: "The system enunciated by Buddha is free from the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification. Buddha found after six years of ascetic life that the true way 'cannot be attained by one who has lost his strength.... There is a middle path discovered by the Tathagata — a path which opens the eyes and bestows understanding, which leads to peace, to insight to the higher wisdom, to nirvana.'"[116] Gautama's standing for love has been explained by Paul Carus in the words: "The Tathagata lets his mind pervade the four quarters of the world with thoughts of love. And thus the whole wide world, above, below, around, and everywhere will continue to be filled with love, far-reaching, grown great, and beyond measure."[117]. As a matter of fact, it is not always desirable to love. For example, it is undesirable to love falsehood, injustice and dishonesty. He who is in love with falsehood will soon find himself in misery and he who is in love with vices will invite troubles on himself. Just as Jesus and Satan could not be in love with each other, so could Gautama and Mara not be so.[118] But the Beats do not pay attention to this fact.

In fact, hatred is not a superfluous emotion; what is required is its right use: one has to hate vicious ways, otherwise one will be doing undesirable things.

However, in one sense, they are different from the Buddhists: Buddha does not pay any attention to the sociological factors while analysing the causes of suffering in this world and holds noneelse but the individual responsible for it. But the Beats, especially Gary Snyder and Ginsberg, do not believe in not paying any attention to the sociological and political affairs of the world. That is why they go on criticising the ways of the governments,

especially the American government. For instance, Gary Snyder declares in his article "Buddhism and the Coming Revolution": "No one today can afford to be innocent, or indulge himself in ignorance of the nature of contemporary governments, politics and social orders. The national polities of the modern world maintain their existence by deliberately festered craving and fear; monstrous protection rackets."[119] Snyder claims that he is trying to reconcile the oriental thinking with the occidental one and asserts: "The mercy of the West has been social revolution; the mercy of the East has been individual insight into the basic self/void. We need both. They are both contained in the traditional three aspects of the Dharma path; wisdom (prajna), meditation (dhyana), and morality (sila)."[120] But this approach is different from Buddha's.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Naked Angels: The Lives and Literature of the Beat Generation* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), p. 25.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 174.
5. *Kerouac: A Biography* (San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1973), p. 204.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 199.
7. The four noble truths mentioned by Gautama Buddha are recorded in *The Gospel of Budha* like this:

   "Now, this, O bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning suffering:

   "Birth is attended with pain, decacy is painful, disease is painful, death is painful. Union with the unpleasant is painful, painful is separation from the pleasant; and any craving that is unsatisfied, that too is painful. In brief, bodily conditions which spring from attachment are painful.

   "This, then, O bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning suffering:

"Now this, O bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the origin of suffering:

"Verily, it is that craving which causes the renewal of existence, accompanied by sensual delight, seeking satisfaction now here, now there, the craving for the gratification of the passions, the craving for a future life, and the craving for happiness in this life."

"This, then, O bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the origin of suffering:

"Now this, O bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the destruction of suffering:

"Verily, it is the destruction, in which no passion remains, of this very thirst; it is the laying aside of, the being free from, the dwelling no longer upon this thirst.

"This, then, O bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the destruction of suffering.

"Now this, O bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the way which leads to the destruction of sorrow. Verily; it is this noble eightfold path; that is to say:

"Right views; right aspirations; right speech; right behaviour; right livelihood; right effort; right thoughts; and right contemplation.

"This, then, O bhikkhus, is the noble thoughts; and right contemplation.

"This, then O bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the destruction of sorrow."

[*The Gospel of Buddha*, compiled by Paul Carus (Chicago and London: The Open Court Publishing Co. 1917) p. 52].

8. *Reality Sandwiches 1953-60* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1970 [1963]), p. 9.
9. *The Gates of Wrath* (Bolinas: Grey Fox Press, 1972), p. 9.
10. *Empty Mirror* (New York: Totem Press, 1961), p. 13.
11. *Mind Breaths: Poems 1972-1977* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1978), p. 82.
12. Gautama preached: " 'Birth is suffering; old age is suffering; disease is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow and misery are suffering; affliction and depair are suffering; to be united with loathsome things is suffering; the loss of that which we love and the failure in attaining that which is longed for are

suffering; all in attaining that which is longed for are suffering; all these things, O brethern, are suffering.'" *The Gospel of Buddha*, compiled by Paul Carus [Chicago and London: The Open Court Publishing House, 1917], p. 125.

13. *Mind Breaths: Poems 1972-1977* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1978), p. 84.
14. Genesis III, 1-19.
15. *Mind Breaths: Poems 1972-1977* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1978), p. 59.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
17. *The Fall of America: Poems of these States 1965-1971* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1972), p. 135.
18. *Empty Mirror* (New York: Corinth Books, 1961), p. 29.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
20. *Allen Ginsberg* (New York: Twayne, 1969), p. 15.
21. *Kaddish and Other Poems 1958-1960* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1970 [1961]), p. 67.
22. *Riprap, and Cold Mountain Poems* (New York: Four Seasons Foundation, 1976 [1958]), p. 22.
23. Allen Ginsberg, *Mind Breaths: Poems 1972-1977* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1978), p. 59.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 495.
25. The Town and the City (New York: The Universal Library, 1950), pp. 136-137.
26. The Sanskrta couplet is:

    jatasya hi dhruvo mratyurdhruvam janma mratasya cha tasmadapariharyerthe ne twam shochitumarhasi (*The Gita*, II, 27).
27. Jack Kerouac, *The Visions of Gerard and Tristessa* (London: Andre Deutsche, 1963 [1958]), p. 51.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
30. Jack Kerouac, *The Visions of Gerard and Tristessa* (London: Andre Deutsche, 1963 [1958]), p. 31.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
35. *Vision of Cody* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), p. 279.
36. Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: Viking, 1957 [1952]), p. 57.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
38. Jack Kerouac, *Desolation Angels* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1965 [1960]), p. 339.
39. Jack Kerouac, *Scattered Poems* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1972), p. 19.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
41. *The New American Poetry 1945-1960*, ed. Donald M. Allen (New York: Grove Press, 1960), p. 130.
42. *Gasoline* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1968 [1958]), p. 17.
43. Gautama the Buddha says in the *The Dhammapada* (XXIV, 335): *"yam esa sahati jamni tanha loke visattika/soka tassa pavaddhanti abhivattem va biranam"* which means "Whomsoever this fierce craving, full of poison, overcomes in the world, his sorrow increases like the abounding birana grass." (*The Dhammapada* ed. and trans. S. Radhakrishnan (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1974 [1950]), p. 166.
44. *The Dharma Bums* (New York: Viking, 1972 second printing [1958]), p. 29.
45. *The Gospel of Buddha*, compiled by Paul Carus (Chicago and London: Open Court, 1917), p. 93.
46. *Visions of Gerard and Tristessa* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1963 [1958]), p. 130.
47. *The Gospel of Buddha*, compiled by Paul Carus (Chicago and London: Open Court, 1917), p. 94.
48. Gautama's spiritual quest was hampered by Mara but Gautama was a quester not to submit to any temptation. How Gautama was tempted has been narrated like this:

    "The three daughters of Mara tempted the Bodhisatta, but he paid no attention to them, and when Mara saw that he could kindle no desire in the heart of the victorious sumana, he ordered all the evil spirits at his command to attack him and overawe the great muni.

    "But the Blessed One watched them as one would watch the harmless game of children. All the fierce hatred of the evil

spirits was of no avail. The flames of hell became wholesome breezes of perfume and the angry thunderbolts were changed into lotus-blossoms.

"When Mara saw this, he fled away with his army from the Bodhi-tree...." *The Gospel of Buddha*, compiled by Paul Carus (Chicago and London: The Open Court Publishing House, 1917), pp. 36-37.

49. Gautama the Buddha told Simha: " 'I teach, Simha, that all the conditions of heart which are evil and not good, unrighteous sections by deed, by word, and by thought, must be burnt away. He who has freed himself, Simha, from all these conditions of heart which are evil and not good, he who has destroyed them as a palm-tree which is rooted out, so that they cannot grow up again, such a man has accomplished the eradication of self.

" I proclaim, Simha, the annihilation of egotism, of lust, of ill-will, of delusion. However, I do not proclaim the annihilation of forbearance, of love, of charity, and of truth.' "(*The Gospel of Buddha*, compiled by Paul Carus [Chicago and London: Open Court, 1917], p. 146).

50. "Blazing the Beats," *Time* LXXI, 8 (24 February 1958), p. 104.

51. Gautama also found his consciousness to be visited by the scenes of evil as has been recorded in *The Gospel of Buddha:*

"The Bodhisatta, having put Mara to flight, gave himself up to meditation. All the miseries of the world, the evils produced by evil deeds and the sufferings arising therefrom, passed before his mental eye, and he thought:

" 'Surely if living creatures saw the results of all their evil deeds, they would turn away from them in disgust. But selfhood blinds them, and they cling to their obnoxious desires. ...

"The world is full of evil and sorrow, because it is full of lust. Men go astray because they think that delusion is better than truth. Rather than truth they follow error, which is pleasant to look at in the beginning but in the end causes anxiety, tribulation, and misery.'" (*The Gospel of Buddha*, compiled by Paul Carus [Chicago and London: The Open Court Publishing House, 1917], pp. 40-41).

52. W. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, II, ii, 249-50.

53. *Visions of Cody* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), p. 367.

54. *The Gospel of Buddha*, compiled by Paul Carus (Chicago and London: Open Court, 1917), p. 51.

55. *The Hudson Review*, XXXII, 1 (Spring 1978), pp. 36-40.

56. Gautama Buddha taught: "'And this is the sign that a man follows the right path: Uprightness is his delight, and he sees danger in the least of those things which he should avoid. He trains himself in the commands of morality, he encompasseth himself with holiness in word and deed; he sustains his life by means that are quite pure; good is his conduct, guarded is the door of his senses; mindful and self-possessed, he is altogether happy.'" (Gautama Buddha, *The Gospel of Buddha*, compiled by Paul Carus [Chicago and London: Open Court, 1917], p. 143).

57. *Desolation Angels* (New York: Coward - McCann, 1965 [1960]), p. 339.

58. Gary Snyder, *Riprap and Cold Mountain Poems* (San Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation, 1976), p. 51.

59. Gary Snyder, *Six Selections from Mountains and Rivers Without End Plus One* (San Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation, 1970), p. 1.

60. Gautama, the Buddha, is reported to have observed: "The truth remains hidden from him who is in the bondage of hate and desire." (*The Gospel of Buddha*, compiled by Paul Carus [Chicago and London: The open Court Publishing Co.1917], p. 43).

61. *The Gospel of Buddha*, compiled by Paul Carus (Chicago and London: The Open Court Publishing House, 1917), p. 176.

62. *Visions of Cody* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), p. 373.

63. *Reality Sandwiches 1953-60* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1970 [1963]), p. 9.

64. Gautama the Buddha taught the brethren: "Whether Buddhas arise, O priests, or whether Buddhas do not arise, it remains a fact that the fixed and necessary constitution of being that all conformations are transitory. This fact a Buddha discovers and masters, and when he has discovered and mastered it, he announces, teaches, publishes, proclaims, discloses, minutely explains and makes it clear that all conformations are transitory." (*The Gospel of Buddha*, compiled by Paul Carus [Chicago and London: The Open Court Publishing House, 1917], p. 60).

65. Explaining this theory Sri Surath observes: "Both the scientist of today and the Yogi accept that in Cosmic evolution the cells are always gradually changing. One cell gives rise to another cell which comes to take its place. This process goes on and on. Actually one cell is transformed to another cell in time and

space. For example, as Buddha tells us, a man say at 5-00 p. m. on a particular day is really a changing reality, and he is not the same man at 5-01 p. m. on that same day. In every moment the cells change and both the man as a whole and his individual cells are a changing reality." (*Samadhi and Beyond* [Calcutta, India: Surath Chakravarti, 1973], p. 74).

66. The Hindus, on the other hand believe that what changes is only the appearance and that both the Soul and the Ultimate Soul remain unchanged. In the *Gita* Krishna, the teacher, tells Arjun, the student, that there neither was nor will be a time when they are not there or will cease to be. (*The Gita* II, 12).

67. The Pali verses are:

ko nu haso kim anando niccam pajjalite sati?

andhakarena onaddha padipam na gavessatha?

parijinnam idam rupam, roganiddham pabhanguram

bhijjati puti sandeho maran antam hi jivitam.

(*Dhammapada*, XI, 146, 148 trans. S. Radhakrishnan (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1974 [1950]), p. 108).

68. Jack Kerouac, *Visions of Gerard and Tristessa* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1963 [1958]), p. 92.

69. *The Gita*, II, 13.

70. Jack Kerouac, *Scattered Poems* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1972), p. 30.

71. Jack Kerouac, *The Town and the City* (New York: The Universal Library, Grossel and Dunlap, 1950), p. 346.

72. Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: Viking, 1957), p. 211.

73. *The Beats*, ed. Seymour Krim (Greenwich: Fawcett, 1963 [1996]), p. 151.

74. The Buddha told Sariputta and the brethren: " 'Life is instantaneous and living is dying. Just as a chariot-wheel in rolling rolls only at one point of the tire, and in resting rests only at one point; in exactly the same way, the life of a living being lasts only for the period of one thought. As soon as that thought has ceased the being is said to have ceased.'" (*The Gospel of Buddha* compiled by Paul Carus [Chicago and London: The Open Court Publishing House, 1917], p. 113).

75. Gary Snyder, *Turtle Island* (New York: New Directions, 1974), p. 15.

76. Gary Snyder, *Riprap and Cold Mountain Poems* (San Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation, 1976), p. 28.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
78. *Turtle Island* (New York: New Directions, 1974 [1969]), p. 67.
79. *Empty Mirror* (New York: Totem Press, 1961), pp. 23-24.
80. *The Gates of Wrath* (Bolinas: Grey Fox Press, 1972), p. 24.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
83. Allen Ginsberg, *Indian Journals* (San Francisco: City Lights and Dave Haselwood, 1971 [1970]) p. 11.
84. *New American Poetry: 1945-60*, ed. Donald M. Allen (New York: Grove Press, 1960), p. 133.
85. Gregory Corso, *Happy Birthday of Death* (New York: New Directions, 1960, Seventh Printing), p. 11.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
87. *New American Poetry: 1945-1960*, ed. Donald M. Allen (New York: Grove Press, 1960), pp. 173-74.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 168.
89. *The Gospel of Buddha* compiled by Paul Carus (Chicago and London: The Open Court Publishing House, 1917), p. 163.
90. Gary Snyder, *Six Selections from Mountains and Rivers without End Plus One* (Sen Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation, 1970 [1961]), p. 38.
91. Gary Snyder, *Turtle Island* (New York: New Directions, 1974 [1969]), p. 6.
92. Paul Carus, *The Gospel of Buddha* (London and Chicago: Open Court, 1917), p. 73.
93. Jack Kerouac, *The Town and the City* (New York: The Universal Library, 1950), p. 154.
94. Allen Ginsberg, *Ankor-Wat* (London: Fulcrum Press, 1968), p. 1 (not printed).
95. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
97. *Kaddish and Other Poems 1958-1960* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1970, eleventh printing [1961]), p. 77.

98. *The Dharma Bums* (London: Mayflower, 1965 [1958]), p. 145.
99. Gary Snyder, *Earth House Hold: Technical Notes and Queries to Fellow Dharma Revolutionaries* (New York: New Directions, 1969 [1957]), p. 75.
100. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
101. Gary Snyder, *The Back Country* (New York: New Directions 1968 [1957]), p. 14.
102. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* Vol. I (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966 [1923]), p. 415.
103. *Ibid.*, p. 425.
104. Jack Kerouac, *Desolation Angels* (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc. 1965 [1960]), pp. 68-69.
105. The Sanskrita couplet, which means this, is:
paritranaya iadhunam vinasaya ca duskrtam
dharmasamsthapanarthaya sambhavami yuge-yuge.
The Gita, IV. 6.
106. Jack Kerouac, *Scattered Poems* (San Franscisco: City Lights, 1972), p. 25.
107. *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.
108. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy Vol. I* (London: George Allen and Unwin 1966 [1923]), p. 373.
109. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
110. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
111. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
112. *Naked Poetry*, eds. Berg and Mezey (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill, 1969), p. 343.
113. Gary Snyder, *The Fudo Trilogy* (Berkeley: Shaman Drum, 1973), p. 3. not printed).
114. *Poetics of the New American Poetry*, ed. Donald M. Allen and Warren Tallman (New York: Grove Press, 1973), p. 409.
115. Jack Kerouac, *The Town and the City* (New York: Universal Library, 1950), p. 468.
116. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* Vol. I (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966 [1923]), p. 420.
117. The Gospel of Buddha, compiled by Paul Carus (Chicago and London: The Open Court Publishing House, 1917), p. 143.

118. Even in *Rgveda* one is asked to hate a man who hates a man going on the right path when the sage sings:

udagadayamadityo vishvena sahasa saha
dvishantam mahavam randhvanmo aham dwishata redham

(*Rgveda* I, 50, XIII).

which in English means: "O learned man, just as this undecaying sun rises with the whole of its brightness, you should rise with the whole of your capability; just as you punish a man who hates one going on the right path, so should I treat my enemy; I should treat my enemy as he treats me." (This is based on the interpretation given by Swami Dayananda Saraswati in his book *Rgveda: Hindi Bhashya* [Delhi: Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, n.d.], p. 277).

119. *The Poetics of the New American Poetry*: ed. Donald N. Allen and Warren Tallman (New York: Grove Press, 173), pp. 392-93.

120. *Ibid.*, pp. 394.

3

Ecology and the Zen Philosophy in the Beats

Critics like Stephen Mahoney,[1] Ann Charters,[2] Thomas F. Merrill,[3] Warren Tallman,[4] Lawrence Lipton,[5] and John Tytell[6] mention the fact that the Beat writers have a liking for the Zen philosophy. In his book *Allen Ginsberg* Thomas P. Merrill makes a remark to this effect when he observes: "Zen Buddhism also appeals to the Beat personality in two other practical ways. First, it avoids asceticism.... Sex, for example, is recognised as a healthy, natural human instinct and is treated with respect and understanding; Zen Buddhism does not repress sexual feelings or activities.

"Second, the 'oneness' of the Zen attitude precludes the stringent moralising that is all too evident in Western religious dogma. The question of morality in Zen is simplified to a fidelity to one's natural self, a position clearly above and beyond the usual categories of right and wrong."[7] But Merrill does not make even a passing mention of the central doctrine of the Zen philosophy. If his view is accepted, the Zen philosophy will be reduced to a view advanced by immoral people to justify sensuality.

It is not right to assert that the Zen philosophy supports sensuality. Let us turn to the second of the four prayers of the Zen enumerated by D.T. Suzuki:

"(i) However numberless all beings be, I pray that they may all be saved

(ii) However inexhaustible the passions be, I pray that they may all be eradicated.

(iii) However immeasurably differentiated the Dharma is, I pray that it may all be studied.

(iv) However supremely exalted the Buddha-way may be, I pray that it may all be attained."[8]

Here it has been made unambiguously evident that a Zen-man prays for the *eradication* of passions even though it has been accepted that they are inexhaustible. So the Beats can be considered the adherents of the Zen philosophy not because they are sensualists but because they try to eradicate passions. In his poem "Sometime Jailhouse Blues' Ginsberg records how he tries to control wrath when he says:

> Sometime I'll lay down my wrath,
> As I lay my body down
> Between the ache of breath and breath
> Golden slumber in the bone.[9]

The poem is in agreement with the Zen philosophy because it stands for the controlling of passions.

While commenting on Snyder's poem 'After Work' included in the 'Far West' section of *The Back Country* Anthony Hunt asserts: "Thus Snyder's so-called nature poems, dramatically situated in the mountains of America's 'Far West' may often be seen as essentially metaphysical, yoking together an aspect of Oriental culture with the environment of the Occident, 'After Work' merely reflects the man who wrote it, an American trail crewman and mountaineer who has devoted most of his adult life to the study and practice of Zen Buddhism."[10]

Here is an attempt to identify Zen Buddhism with the practice of putting diverse and incompatible things together. Hunt also says, "The relationship in dynamic balance simultaneously involves a togetherness and an against-ness."[11] The critic makes an attempt to identify Zen Buddhism with a love of sensuality and interprets the poem in that light.

But if the Beats believe that Zen Buddhism allows people to harbour evil thoughts and to do whatever they like, and forbids them to do nothing, they have not been able to understand this philosophy. While explaining what the Tower or the highest point in the sense of spiritual enlightenment means Suzuki observes:" 'This is the abode where they are delighted to live who have entered into the depths of prajna-paramita; who know how to penetrate into the Dharmadhatu which looks out in all directions; who have quieted all the fires of evil passions; who have destroyed by means of their superior knowledge of all the wrong views, desires, and self conceit ....'"[12] In this passage Suzuki explicitly says that one who reaches the tower of spiritual enlightenment has a superior knowledge right and wrong and that he has quieted the fires of evil passions. But Thomas F. Merrill believes that the Beats like Zen Buddhism because it frees them from the sense of guilt which Christianity breeds. He argues: "Clearly, the Western religious tradition is unacceptable by the Beat Generation because it presupposes an authority from outside the personality, because it imposes an arbitrary ethical system upon men which breeds competition, envy, greed, and war; and, finally, because the concept of guilt is inherently antagonistic to the extreme humanism which is at the heart of Beat thinking. The solution to the problem is simply to relieve the tension between Good and Evil. Zen Buddhism effectively does so, and in this quality is the secret of its appeal to troubled Westerners."[13] But it is

wrong to believe that the Zen philosophy makes no distinction between the right and the wrong or that the Beats do not regard anything as evil. As a mater of fact, every ethical system must reject some passions and actions as undesirable and must make a man feel guilty for indulging in them. The ethical rules which various systems uphold are the results of people's efforts to know what is right in the eyes of the powers which govern the universe. That is why enlightenment must bring all explorers to the same conclusions. The Dharma or the right path is only one, not many, just as the shortest line between two points is always one. The reason why there are differences between the findings of various prophets and sages is that man's capacities are limited and nobody is able to see the whole of the universe at one glance.

The fact is that Zen philosophy stands for a man's meditating and coming to enlightenment through his own efforts without taking the help of books or theories prepared by others. Thich Thien-An explains it when he observes in his book *Zen Philosophy, Zen Practice:* "The distinctive feature of the Buddha's practice at the time of his enlightenment was his inner search. This is the method of Zen Buddhism and indicates just where it differs from other religions and spiritual practices. Most other religions place a supreme God above man and then ask that he pray to God and worship him, implying that reality is to be sought externally. The way of Zen is very different, for Zen holds that reality is to be gotten hold of, not externally, but inwardly."[14] Likewise, while commenting on Jack Kerouac's novel *The Dharma Bums* Warren Tellman observes: " The easiest way to approach *The Dharma Bums*—the truth bums—is to imagine an exceptionally talented musician trying out a new instrument in an interested but nonetheless very tentative way. The instrument is Zen Buddhism, American fashion."[15] But he does not come to the problem as to

which aspects of this philosophy are acceptable to Kerouac and how far he has shown its ethics to be a way to salvation. Lawrence Lipton also discusses the philosophic ground on which the Beats stand and while doing so he observes that Gary Snyder has "taken the way of Zen, although the results are not yet fully developed in [his] poetry"[16] and that "Allen Ginsberg may be regarded... as a poet in transition between the *Agonia* and the Dharma, which Zen Buddhists define as the method by which self-frustration may be brought to an end.[17]

The following entry in Ginsberg's *Indian Journals* records how Ginsberg—meditates on metaphysical questions:

> Now I am brooding on a pillow
> with my arm resting on my head....
> This is myself in the flesh. Whom
> am I to trust? I feel companion
> to all of us now before death
> waiting inside Life....[18]

The realisation that he comes to is that he should trust himself and realise his own true nature. The sentence 'This is myself in the flesh' in the third line of this passage means that the poet becomes conscious of his own nature. This is a Zen realisation as is evident from what Thich Thien-An says in the following passage: "To practice meditation is to remove the layers of clouds that conceal our true being so that our Buddha nature may appear again, wonderful and radiant in its intrinsic purity. .... But when he attained Enlightenment, he realised that the truth he sought was nothing other than his true nature, which was ever with him before the beginning of time."[19] Allen Ginsberg realises the oneness of all things. Such a realisation is called *prajna* in the Zen terminology. Explaining what *prajna* means D.T. Suzuki observes: "Prajna is the experience

a man has when he feels in its most fundamental sense the infinite totality of things, that is, psychologically speaking, when the finite ego, breaking its hard crust, refers itself to the infinite which envelops everything that is finite and limited and therefore, transitory. We may take this experience as being somewhat akin to a totalistic intuition of something that transcends all particularised, specified experience."[20] This prajna is one of the six Zen virtues, namely *Dana* (charity), *Sila* (precepts), *Ksanti* (humility), *Virya* (energy), *Dhyana* (meditation), and *Prajna* (wisdom).[21]

In the poem 'Avocado' while likening the *dharma* to an Avocado Snyder says that man's original nature is the central thing in the Dharma:

> And the skin is thin,
> The great big round seed
> In the middle,
> Is your own Original Nature—
> Pure and smooth,
> Almost nobody ever splits it open
> or ever tries to see
> If it will grow...[22]

And since Zen Buddhism regards the finding of one's own nature to be one's attaining enlightenment, this poem is evidently an embodiment of a Zen Buddhist idea.

The experience of attaining enlightenment has been described by the Beats. For example, Allen Ginsberg describes a moment of enlightenment when he records: "I had a moment of clarity, saw the feeling in the heart of things, walked out to the garden crying."[23] This enlightenment makes the poet cry, but "[w]hen the Buddha attained Supreme Enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, he laughed,"[24] Ginsberg says: "The world knows the love

that's in its breast as in the flower, the suffering lonely world,"[25] It is the realisation of a fellow-feeling with the objects of nature that makes him cry. The poet has become conscious of the totality of the universe and finds a flower and the earth to be identical things. And this is again a Zen view, as D.T. Suzuki observes in his article "Lectures on Zen Buddhism": "If the one is in the many, the many must be in the one. The many is what makes the one possible. God is the world and the world is in God. God and the world are separate and not identical in the sense that God cannot exist outside the world and that the one is indistinguishable from the other. They are one and yet each retains its individuality: God is infinitely particularising and the world of particulars finds itself nestled in the bosom of God."[26]

Zen wishes a man to know himself. Stressing this fact Erich Fromm observes: "Zen is aimed at the knowledge of one's own nature. It searches to 'Know thyself.' But this knowledge is not the 'scientific' knowledge of the modern psychologist, the knowledge of the knower-intellect who knows himself as object; knowledge of self in Zen is knowledge which is not intellectual, which is non-alienated, it is full experience in which knower and known become one."[27]

The Beats express their experiences as seekers in their poems. For instance, in the poem 'The Eye Altering Alters All' Ginsberg talks about the confusion of the questers when he says:

> Many seek and never see,
> anyone can tell them why.
> O they weep and O they cry
> and never take until they try
> unless they try it in their sleep

and never some until they die
I ask many, they ask me
This is a great mystery.[28]

It is wrong to believe that any one can tell the reason of a quester's failure as it is only the enlightened one that can do the job. That is why the narrator has to ask just as "they' have to do and neither the narrator nor the other questers have been able to attain enlightenment.

Jack Kerouac shows his characters making efforts to attain enlightenment in his novel *Visions of Cody:* "'.... none of us breathing or moving until Cody said 'We must all be cool and relaxed as though nothing was on our minds at all, dig please, man, Joanna, be straight in your soul and admit whatever feelings and act on them right away, 'don't let even a second rot—'as the saying is, *blow,* or anything, or so, do it, start, begin, now. So we fiddled and daddled and nothing really happened, ... were frightened by the darkness in the house, in fact the creaking mystery, philosophical void, the missing of the point, the obvious sadness of having to die never having known something about everything...'"[29] Here the effort to attain illumination brings nothing but the fear of death with it. But if we turn to the former page, we find the reason too in Jack Duluoz's words: "'My feeling for Cody was ethereal, like for a character in a book, for Joanna, earthy—'"[30] It is this earthiness that is causing an obstruction in the way to satori. In a way it also shows the writer's recognition of human weakness. But the way of meditation suggested here is different from the Zen way of meditation which has been summarised in the following advice given to a son by his father:" 'Then from today on, for the next week, I would like you to sit down for one hour a day, let your mind flow and write down in the notebook every idea that comes into your mind—every plan every desire, every

memory. The only thing I ask is that you do it honestly, with complete candor. Then come to me at the end of the week, and show me the notebook.'"[31] This practice is aimed at removing evil thoughts from the mind. Explaining it Thich Thien-An observes: "The only solution is to pursue the evil thoughts to their roots in the mind and extricate the roots themselves; then our minds will become pure and clear. The first step in this process is to become aware of our faults. So long as we are blind to our faults, no self-cultivation can take place at all, for our passions, hatreds and delusions are the material upon which self-cultivation works."[32] In Kerouac's novel *Visions of Cody*, Cody commits a mistake as he advises meditators to set on their feelings without waiting at all. Such a practice will make a man commit misdeeds though Zen meditation aims at making a man's mind pure and clean. There is no enlightenment in the case of Cody or his companions because the way of meditation is wrong. Illumination is possible only when one acquires the capacity to distinguish the right from the wrong and awakens his Buddha nature.

Mountain-climbing people are presented in Kerouac's novel *The Dharma Bums*. Climbing up a mountain is a symbolic description of moving higher in the field of spiritual attainments. Explaining it Thich Thien-An observes: "A person who practices religion is like a person who climbs to the top of a mountain. The many different methods are the many different ways one may climb the mountain."[83] In this novel Ray Smith's experiences of spiritual ascent are recorded. Once Ray talks of a transcendental vision when he says: "'The warm wind made the pines talk deep one night when I began to experience what is called 'Samapatti' which, in Sanskrit means Transcendental Vista. ... I saw an ancient vision of Dipankara Buddha.... It, the vision, was devoid of any sensation of I being myself, it was pure egolessness, just simply wild ethereal activities

devoid of any wrong predicates.... devoid of effort, devoid of mistake. 'Everything's all right,' I thought,'"[34] Since this man comes to the inference that everything is all right, it is evident that he is in a state of confusion rather than enlightenment. Or he is being tempted by evil forces, which Christians call Satan, Buddha called Mara, and the Hindus call *asuras,* to commit sin. The same thing can be said about another meditation vision of Ray Smith:" "One night in a meditation vision Avalokitesvara the Hearer and Answerer of Prayer said to me 'You are empowered to remind people that they are utterly free' so I laid my hand on myself to remind myself first and then felt gay, yelled 'Ta,' opened my eyes, and a shooting star shot.'"[35] But what has been regarded as enlightenment by this man is not enlightenment as it is wrong to believe that man's freedom in the universe means that he will not be punished for his misdeeds or that there is no difference between the virtuous deeds and the vicious ones. Man is free only in the sense that when a man has to decide what to do, it is entirely upto him to decide what he will choose and that there is no external force to compel him to choose this or that, but when once he has chosen to do something, its consequences will inevitably follow.[36]

Keith N. Hull regards the novel *The Dharma Bums* as the story of the way how Ray attains enlightenment. He argues in his article "A Dharma Bum Goes West to Meet the East":

> The novel is not thickly plotted, but attitudes, philosophical opinions, modes of thought and behaviour are of great importance, while events and personalities are important insofar as they create or alter them. The focus of this philosophical action is the relationship between Zen-mountainman, poet, orientalist Japhy Ryder and

> dude, wino, poet Ray Smith, Japhy is happy and secure in the combination he has worked out of wild-western love and Oriental culture while Ray is restless, searching, rootless, and, fortunately for us, superficial, forever reducing Buddhist principles to cant as he hoists his bottomless wine bottle. The surprisingly subtle structure of the novel depends on the slow, backsliding progress that Ray makes towards achieving the Zen ideal which Japhy holds out for him."[37]

He concludes his argument saying:

> Since I am ignorant of what it is I hesitate to say that Ray has achieved *satori*, but his attitude comes close to that of Basho who had. Hypothetically then Ray's Zen education could be complete, yet Kerouac leaves us with a little blurr under our philosophical saddles. The retreat from abstraction, the new perception of reality, the acceptance of the natural world, all point to Ray's enlightenment. What though do we make of the 'simple' statement about the butterfly and the chipmunk might as well be a butterfly, going in the rocks as one and emerging as the other? Has Ray thus really clung to his old ways? Or should the statement be analysed so rationally? Might it not be a koan, a cryptic statement made by a Zen master for his followers to meditate on?[38]

Hull is not able to commit himself to the view that Ray has attained enlightenment. He says he does not know what *satori* is. *Satori* or enlightenment is nothing but becoming aware of the things as they are; it is the name of a state of mind in which one is free from ignorance and in which

one is able to describe what *is* as *is* and what *is not* as *is not*. Thich Thien-An describes it in the words: "When we experience that we and everything in the universe are not different, that we are a part of everything and everything is within us, in other words, if we realise the oneness of everything, that is *satori*."[39] Gautama Buddha, in his doctrine of the eightfold path,[40] makes a distinction between the right action and the wrong action when he suggests that a man should do only what is right. So does he do when he instructs people to think only a right thought. Since Ray comes to believe that man is free to do what he likes, he is as far from *satori* as the north pole is from the south one.

The Zen philosophy wishes a man to think for himself rather than take things for granted, Explaining it D.T. Suzuki observes: "Whatever misunderstandings or misinterpretations Zen has incurred from its outside critics, its chief merit consists in clearing our consciousness of all the rubbish it has gathered in the way of philosophical explanations of existence. By its disclaiming the letter which is so apt to thwart the progress of the spirit, Zen has kept its central thought unspoiled. That is to say, it has succeeded in steadily upholding the value of experience and intuition in the understanding of Reality."[41] Gary Snyder's speakers watch things and actions around them and think over them without letting their minds be swayed by any philosophical notions. In the poem 'The Wide Mouth,' for instance, Gary Snyder shows a man watching a snow-falling scene and describes it vividly:

A thick snow
soft falling
the whole house open

Snow flakes build upon a
single dark green spray of pine

The sparrow
swung and shrieked.....[42]

In the poem 'Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout' the speaker records just what he finds happening around him and, at the same time, in his mind when he says:

Down valley a smoke haze
Three days heat, after five days rain
Pitch glows on the fir-cones
Across rocks and meadows
Swarms of new flies.

I cannot remember things I once read
A few friends, but they are in cities.
Drinking cold snow-water from a tin cup
Looking down for miles
Through high still air.[43]

In this poem the speaker meditates like a Zen-man: first, he gives an over-all view of the landscape that lies stretched before him and arrests in five words what he finds in the distant valley: in the second line he describes the weather of the last eight days; in the third line he comes to the trees; and in the fourth and the fifth lines he describes flies. Thus he moves from the inanimate to the animate and from the indistinct to the distinct. The process continues unchanged in the next stanza: the poet first talks of his reading, then his friends, and then himself. By talking of air again in the last line he connects the last line with the first one and himself with the universe. Likewise, in the poem "Piute Creek' he embodies an experience which an onlooker has in the lap of nature when he, 'suspended in the body' becomes 'a living soul':

Sky over endless mountains.

All the junk that goes with being human
Drops away, hard rock wavers
Even the heavy present seems to fail
This bubble of a heart
Words and books
Like a small Creek off a high ledge
Gone in the dry air...[44]

It is in this poem that he talks of his experience of realising that the seer and the seen are one when he says:

A clear, attentive mind
Has no meaning but that
Which sees is truly seen.[45]

The realisation of the oneness of everything is considered to be a thing of great significance. Explaining it Thich Thien-An observes: "When we are enlightened, we realise that the Buddha and everything are one: that is Suchness, Oneness, or Tathata. To realise the oneness of everything is *Kensho*, 'seeing into one's nature.' The non-discriminating mind has no distinctions between subject and object, high and low, good and bad, the Buddha and oneself, Samsara and Nirvana. In Zen Buddhism *Kensho* is usually considered the first step on the path of Enlightenment, but it is perhaps the most important step because it opens the mind's eye to a new dimension of existence and gives us a direct experience of oneness with the universe."[46] That is why the experience Snyder expresses in this poem is a Zen one.

In his article "Clearing the Ground: Gary Snyder and the Modernist Imperative' Robert Kern asserts that Snyder makes objects speak for themselves when he says:

If it is his task to mediate between two worlds, one the world of language and society and the

> other the non-human, non-verbal world, then he has taken on the seemingly paradoxical burden of finding a language for a reality that is prior to language, for an 'utterly incommunicable' nature that is non-verbal by definition—a problem somewhat analogous to Milton's task of relating events of the pre-fallen world in a fallen language, in a language that is itself a result of the fall. Given these tight limits, this Scylla and Charybdis situation, craft for Snyder becomes a matter, as he puts it, of steering a course between them, and his major function in the poem is to allow things to speak as much as possible for themselves in a language stripped of subjective preconception and historical or cultural encrustation, the very process that 'Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout' dramatises."[47]

While trying to claim that Snyder is a writer of "genuine power" Benjamin DeMott asserts: "Absorbed with East-West philosophical interconnections, with links between Buddhist and native American Indian lore and with Jungian themes, Snyder describes himself as a man setting out 'to find somehow a way to actually belong to the land'... to see the world in life terms.... to connect with plants and animals on a subconscious level.'"[48] But he does not mention explicitly as to which theories of the Zen philosophies are projected in the works of Snyder.

"Zen," as Stephen Mahoney observes: "is a nature religion. It is booming at a time when Western man's celebrated victory over nature is less convincing than ever—but when his alienation from nature, including his own nature, seems to be an accomplished fact."[49] Gary Snyder too is a poet of nature. In his poems and articles he takes up for treatment the problem as to how the ways of the

moderns are resulting in the mass killings of animals and birds and the cutting of trees and plants. In the poem 'The Dead by the Side of the Road'[50] he shows that a great red-tailed hawk is killed and thrown by the side of the road and its wings are used as dance-fans. In this very poem he talks of the killing of a skunk, a fawn, a ring-tail, and a doe, and ends the poem with an exhortation to pray to their spirits to bless men. Wordsworth is disturbed to find man killing man and embodies his view in his poem 'What Man Has Made of Man' but Snyder is disturbed to find man killing birds and animals. In his poem 'Front Lines'[51] Snyder expresses his disturbance to find that trees are being cut in large numbers. In this poem he describes "A bulldozer grinding and slobbering/sideslipping and belching on the top of/ The skinned-up bodies of still-live bushes..."[52]

Snyder talks of the young ones of various animals and his observations arouse a feeling of pity for nature. He does so, for instance, in 'Kyoto Born in Spring Song' where he describes the ways of a lizard baby, a centipede baby, a cat baby and a mouse baby.[53] It is easy for a man to feel pity for the young ones whether those of human beings or those of animals. The other topics he writes about are the creeks, sand-dunes, stones, weeds, rivers, mountains, hills, rains and rocks. But when he talks of these things he also brings in human characters, with the result that his poems give a glimpse of harmony between man and nature. For instance, in the poem 'By the Tama River at the North End of the Plain in April' he writes about not only round smooth stones but also about people 'dumping loads in dump trucks'; he describes not only rocks and water but also Nasa, Nanao, Nagaswa, and friends. By showing people eating and drinking in the rain he gives a glimpse of human life when man becomes a part of nature. Likewise, in the poem 'Song of the Tangle' human and other beings

are shown sharing the same mood of happiness and thus in the poem we have a glimpse of what an integration of man and nature means. So does he do in the poem 'Source' included in his collection *Turtle Island*. In this poem is shown a land where nature has not been disturbed by any upholder of civilisation. The poet writes:

> To be in
> to the land
> where cropt-out rock
> can hardly see
> the swiftly passing trees
> Manzanita clans
> cluster up and fan out on their soils
> in streaks and sweeps
> with birds and woodrats underneath.[54]

This assertion is based on the view that man and nature are the parts of one and the same thing or being. Snyder posits his belief in this view explicitly in the poem 'By Frazier Creek Falls' where he says:

> This living flowing land
> in all there is, forever
> We *are* it
> it sings through us—
> We could live on this Earth
> without clothes or tools![55]

And this is a Zen view as is evident from the statement of Thich Thien-An [see *supra*]. However, love for nature and harmony between man and nature have been upheld by writers like Wordsworth in his poems like 'The World is Too Much With Us' too. This signifies the fact that Gary Snyder's love for nature joins him with the Western poets

like Wordsworth on the one hand and the Eastern Zen philosophers on the other.

In the poem 'The Wild Mushroom' Snyder shows that man's problems of life can best be solved by what is provided by uncultured nature as the wild mushroom, not the cultivated and the tamed one, can solve man's problem of food, fun and the like. In the last stanza of the poem he explicitly says so:

> So here's to the mushroom family
> A far-flung friendly clan
> For food, for fun, for poison
> They are a help to man.[56]

In the poem 'Mother Earth: Her Whales' he shows how human beings are thoughtlessly killing lower animals as in China tigers, wild boars and monkeys have gone in a mist giving place to trucks, while in America 'invaders' are waging wars against natural creatures and plants and

> The robots argue how to parcel out our Mother Earth
> To Last, a little longer like vultures flapping
> Belching, gurgling, near a dying Doe.[57]

But Snyder also suggests in the following lines, and also warns people, that Nature too can accept the challenge and if it does, man will find it difficult to face the situation: "May ants, may abalone, otters, wolves and elk/Rise! and pull away their giving form the robot nations."[58] Wordsworth does not fear nature's ever becoming revengeful, but here Snyder does.

In Hardy's novels nature is shown to be causing misery to men, but in Snyder' poems it is nature that is shown being all-treated by man, Snyder's view is being shared by a large number of American writers who believe that it is

desirable for men not to make changes in nature. For instance, Wendell Berry writes to this purpose when he says: "In order to build a road we destroy several thousand acres of farmland forever, all in perfect optimism, without regret, believing that we have gained much and lost nothing. In order to build a dam, which like all human beings will be temporary, we destroy a virgin stream for ever, believing that we have conquered nature and added significantly to our stature. In order to burn cheap coal we destroy a mountain for ever, believing, in the way of the lovers of progress, that what is of immediate advantage to us must be a permanent benefit to our universe."[59] And Snyder is giving poetic expression to a view that is held by a section of the American society, at least.

In the poem 'The Call of the Wild' Snyder's displeasure finds expression in the lines:

> I would like to say
> Coyote is forever
> Inside you.
> But it's not true.[60]

The lines signify that the poet believes that man and nature are not different from each other, and the negation in the last line signifies that at the moment he finds that the harmony that should have been there between man and nature is not there. In his poem 'In the House of the Rising Sun' he condemns the Americans' fighting in Vietnam on the ground that it is causing irreparable damage to nature when he says:

> Vietnam uplands burned-off jungles
> wipe out a few rare birds
> Fish in the rice paddy ditches
> stream a dry foul tastes thru their gills....[61]

In the poem 'White Devils' Snyder talks of two violent deaths, one of a white girl and the second of a horse-sized white wolf bitch both of whom are disembowelled. The description of deaths signifies that the poet rejects the industrial civilisation which is able to keep itself going through undesirable practices. Nature herself is suggested to be speaking to the modern man through Snyder and behaving like the Unconscious of whom a Zen master said:" 'The Unconscious works through my conscious mind, making it understand the true nature of Reality: it is furnished with true transcendental wisdom, it is the master of the Triple Body, it functions with the utmost freedom. So we read in the Ratnakuta that the mind functions by means of the Unconscious without being conscious of it.'"[62]

Thomas J. Lyon finds Snyder's poetry to have ecological significance. He observes: "My point is that Snyder has not been susceptible to either gross cultural influences or temporary currents, but has always seemed to measure things according to a primal standard of wild ecology. The basic materials of this he learned in the West. The Buddhist training has been extremely important, I do not doubt, and the steeping in Oriental writing, particularly Chinese poetry, has helped Snyder as a poet;...."[63] Without ruling out the ecological significance of Snyder's poetry, one must emphasise that Snyder's treatment of nature has a theological significance too. Snyder writes about nature not simply to show how good-looking landscapes are or how they affect the life of man but to change the western man's attitude towards nature and to make him realise how his actions are causing harm to nature and how his whole attitude towards nature stands in need of a radical change.

In the poem 'Thin Ice' Snyder makes man a harmonious

part of nature. Just as Wordsworth describes himself as a cloud wandering lonely in his poem 'Daffodils' Snyder describes himself to be walking like thin ice on thin ice. When he drops in the snow, he goes eight inches in and becomes a part of snow. Here it is physical oneness that represents the inner oneness between man and ice which represents nature. In the poem 'Nook Sack Valley' the narrator is shown wandering aimlessly after discarding all that reason and civilisation had taught him. He has reached a stage where he likes to have neither memories of success and failure nor theories of various philosophies which he calls "damned memories/Whole wasted theories, failures and worse success,...."[64] He employs three symbols here: clouds, a dog and coffee and says:

> Clouds sink down the hills
> Coffee is hot again, the dog
> Turns and turns about, stops and sleeps.[65]

The clouds symbolise memories and they sink down, the dog symbolises reason and rational theories, as they behave like a watch dog over human actions, and here it is shown going to sleep; and coffee symbolises natural impulses as it is described to be hot again.

Gary Snyder behaves like dumb Nature's spokesman to man talking in human tongue trying to bring it home to man that it is wrong for him to indulge in such a large-scale clearing of forests, killing of animals and shooting of birds. In his poem 'Ethnobotany' Snyder mourns the death of an oak which a chainsaw bucks and quarters in the shed and shows some deer muzzling and kicking it. The poet records his lamentation in the words: "[o]nly I got just so slightly sick-/ Taste all, and hand the knowledge down."[66] Gary Snyder here further stresses what Thomas Gary stresses in his 'Elegy Written in a Country-Churchyard' or

Wordsworth does in his poem' On the Death of a Dog' and goes a step ahead because Snyder laments the death of a tree rather than merely a human being or a lower animal. In his article 'The Wilderness' Gary Snyder claims that Nature herself speaks to him: "... the voice that speaks to me as a poet, what Westerners have called the Muse, is the voice of nature herself, whom the ancient poets called the great goddess, the Magna Mater."[67] In the poem 'Prayer for the Great Family' Snyder shows that the whole universe is one family and Mother Earth, plants, air, wild beings, water, the sun, and great sky, grandfather space and the mind, his wife are all its members.[68] So does he do in his poem 'On San Gabriel Ridges' in which he expresses his wish that all his loves and their loves and children twine and knot through each other.[69] Likewise, in the poem 'O Waters' he regards the whole world as "a great earth sangha" the members of which are the poet, Nanao, the Mountains, the snowfields and the soil.[70]

In the poem 'Gen' Snyder shows a human being who wishes to be close to nature and thus stresses the idea of a natural attraction between man and nature, when he says:

> Gen for looking-over-shoulder
> far beyond the waving eucalyptus
> limbs and farther dreaming crow
> flying slow and steady for the ocean;
> eyes over drippy nipple
> at the rising shadow sun
> whales of cool and dark,....[71]

Snyder likes a community of all beings so much that he says that he can support any cultural or economic revolution to achieve it. He expresses such a view in his article "Buddhism and the Coming Revolution" when he says: "Morality is bringing it back out in the way you live,

through personal example and responsible action, ultimately toward the true community (sangha) of 'all beings.' This last aspect means, for me, supporting any cultural and economic revolution that moves clearly toward a free, international classless world. It means using such means as civil disobedience, outspoken criticism, protest, pacifism, voluntary poverty and even gentle violence if it comes to a matter of restraining some impetuous redneck."[72] He derides indiscriminate killing also in the poem 'The Call of the Wild' when he says:

> So they bomb and they bomb
> Day after day, across the planet
> blinding sparrows
> breaking the ear-drum of owls
> splintering trunks of cherries
> Twining and looping
> door intestines
> in the shaken, dusty, rocks,[73]

This state of affairs arouses Snyder's anger against the Americans and he says: "All these Americans up in special cities in the sky/Dumping poisons and explosives...."[74] He tries to make his countrymen feel guilty of their causing death on such a large scale. In the poem "Bedrock' the poet regards nature as a teacher and wishes to learn the lesson of tenderness from it when he says: "Sky and stone,/ teach me to be tender."[75] Wordsworth also regards Nature as a teacher in the poem 'Three Years She Grew.' Going back to nature may theoretically appear to be an attractive suggestion, but the difficulty is that making changes in the natural phenomenon is inevitable otherwise it may not be possible for man to solve the problems of getting food, houses and clothes because unless large scale production is there, it does not seem to be possible to solve them.

Snyder, however, asks people not to fear and says in his poem "Magpie's Song':

> Smell the breeze
> It came through all the trees
> No need to fear
> What's ahead
> Snow up on the hills west
> Will be there every year
> be at rest.[76]

In the poem 'Tomorrow's Song' too he wishes men to learn from nature and to be in rhythm with it. He says:

> Grasp the tools and move in rhythm side by side
> flash gleams of wit and silent knowledge
> eye to eye
> sit still like cats or snakes or stones
> as whole and holding as
> the blue black sky.
> gentle and innocent as wolves
> as tricky as a prince.[77]

It is surprising to note that the poet regards wolves as gentle and innocent and the prince as tricky. This fact, signifies that Snyder associates innocence with nature and guilt with man. He does it in his poems 'Dusty Braces' and 'What Happened Here Before.' In 'Dust Braces' he expresses his disgust for the Americans who as non-rovers, lumber schooners, punchers, miners, dirt farmers and railroad men indulged in killing animals and cutting trees. In the poem 'Tomorrow's Song' he hopes that the pre-civilisation conditions will return and man will again become a part of nature and share the world of cats, snakes, rocks and the

blue sky.[78]

In the poem 'What Happened Here Before' he derides the role of the white man in America and says:

> Then came the white man: tossed up trees
> and boulders with big hoses,
> going after that old gravel and the gold.
> horses, apple-orchards, card-games,
> pistol-shooting, churches, country jail.[79]

In this very poem he takes up the problem of people's quarrelling over the ownership of land. He does not say that land belongs to the Red Indians or the Whites or the workers but declares that "the land belongs to itself."[80] This answer is different from the ones given by Capitalists on the one hand and Communists on the other as, for him, it belongs neither to the landlord nor to the tiller. In the poem 'Toward Climax' he shows how the progress from the primitive days to the present ones has been achieved by causing harm to nature. The attitude of the upholders of civilisation, according to him, has been:

> Squash blossom in the garbage heap.
> Start farming.
> Cows won't stay away, start herding.
> Weaving, throwing clay.
> Get better off, get class,
> make lists, start writing down.
>
> forget wild plants
> lose dream-time
> lose largest size of brain—
>
> get safer, tighter, wrapped in,
> winding smaller, spreading wider,

lay towns out in streets in rows
and build a wall.[81]

And the climax the poet comes to is the widespread killing of people in Viet-Nam just like cutting ripe crops. In the poem 'For the Children' he advises children to reject the philosophy supporting scientific progress, to "stay together"and "learn flowers."[82] In other words he wishes children not to fight but to love nature. Here flowers are a symbol of peaceful life.

Snyder shows the undesirability of man's ways by showing in his poems like 'The Hudsonian Curlew' and 'Two Fawns that Didn't See the Light This Spring' in how pathetic a situation the lower animals are living in this world. In the poem 'The Hudsonian Curlew' he shows that a curlew is killed and eaten up. In 'Two Fawns That Didn't See the Light This Spring' he talks of two fawns which could not be born and see the light of the day because the mother of one of them was shot dead by a friend in the Northern Rockies and that of another hit by a friend with her car in the Northern Sierra.

However, it is strange that Snyder rejects only the cutting of trees, but favours their burning by the Red Indians. His poem" 'Control Burn' suggests that the poet wishes civilised people to imitate the ways of the Indians who know the ways of nature. He writes:

Fire is an old story
I would like,
with a sense of helpful order,
With respect for laws
of nature to help my land
with a burn a hot clean
burn.

(—manzanita seeds will only open
after a fire passes over or
once passed through a bear)

And Then
it would be more
like
when it belonged to the Indians
Before.[83]

Here Snyder is using double standards in judging things: if cutting trees is bad, burning them too is bad as both the activities result in the deaths of trees. It is, in fact, bad to kill animals and cut trees, but the poet should have suggested also that man should change his way of living and should live in such a way that trees and animals remain unharmed. Vegetarianism is one of the ways to attain this ideal. If one eats nothing but grains and ripe fruits, there is a possibility that no harm will be done to any animal or plant.

Snyder has been a serious student of Zen philosophy. The fact is evident from the following statement of Ann Charters made in her biography of Kerouac: "Gary had been studying Japanese for three years, preparing for his trip to a Zen monastery. He was also translating the Chinese poet Hen-Shan the fall Jack met him."[84] Thus the similarity between the Zen attitude to nature and Gary Snyder's views is not a coincidence. Even though love of nature has been championed by European and American thinkers like Rousseau, Wordsworth, and Thoreau, and Snyder may be regarded as a member of the same school, yet the way nature is treated by him suggests that Zen philosophy has played a role in shaping his attitude towards nature.

Such an attitude towards nature is found in the works of Ginsberg and Kerouac too. In the poem 'Energy Vampire'

Ginsberg gives expression to his sympathies for the plants suffering on account of the ways of man. When he says:

> Drawing long steel knife
> up tender skin
> woodbark
> 7 foot logs—[85]

The use of the expression 'tender skin' suggests that the poet regards trees as deserving the treatment given to children.

Jack Kerouac's love of nature finds expression in his novels *The Dharma Bums* and *The Town and the City.* In *The Dharma Bums* Ray describes the life in nature to be one like that in paradise when he says "'I chopped some wood and added it to the pile behind the stove. The fog began to blow in from the Pacific, the trees bowed deeply and roared. From the top of the hill you could see nothing but trees, trees, a roaring sea of trees. It was paradise."[86] In *The Town and the City* Peter draws the readers' attention to the fact that man is disturbing the organic life of the earth by cutting trees and killing birds, fish and other lower animals when he says:" '... we catch a fish, we lock him up in the compartment where there's no water and he suffocates and dies, alone, while we drive along in the fresh New Hempshire air. He had the water of this brook and the sunshine in the afternoon..... and now we're going to throw him in the back of the car and let him die. There it is.'"[87]

In the piece 'How to Meditate' Jack Kerouac describes what one should do while meditating and explains how he tries to attain the state of thoughtlessness when he says: "When a thought comes a —springing from afar with its hold-forth figure of image, you spoof it out, you

supff it off, you fake it, and it fades, and thought never comes —and with joy you realise for the first time 'Thinking's just not not thinking— ....'[88] This closely resembles the description of what D.T. Suzuki calls meditating on Emptiness and describes in the following words when he quotes a sermon on 'The Abandoning of the Body': " 'The method of abandoning the body consists first in meditating on Emptiness, whereby the [conscious] mind is emptied. Let the mind together with its world be quietened down to a perfect state of tranquillity; let thought be cast in the mystery of quietude, so that the mind is kept from wandering from one thing to another. When the mind is tranquillised in its deepest abode, its entanglements are cut asunder. How unfathomable! The mind in its absolute purity is the Void itself.'"[89]

The Beats talk of excretion and other dirty things. This too is in agreement with the Zen approach to life. While discussing the Zen approach to life Thomas Meston observes: "Zen masters frequently took their examples from the monastery latrine, just to make sure that the students should know how to 'accept' every aspect of ordinary life and not be blocked by the mania of dividing things into holy and unholy, noble and ignoble, valuable and valueless. When one attains to pure consciousness, everything has infinite value."[90]

The Zen way of meditation, as explained by D.T. Suzuki, is letting one's mind wander and watching the ideas that visit it. D.T. Suzuki says: "The phrase in Chinese, *Ying wu so chu erh sheng ch'i hsin,* the original Sanskrit of which is *Na kvacit pratisthitam cittam utpadyavitavyam.* Freely translated, it is, 'Let your mind (or thought) take its rise without fixing it anywhere.' ... When we are dependent on anything, we cannot be perfectly free; and it is then that the idea of an ego-soul or of a creator known as God is

generally found to be taking hold of us."[91] In many of his poems Gary Snyder records a number of disconnected things and the fact suggests that the poet is simply letting his mind wander and is thus meditating in the Zen way. He describes a situation and then records various thoughts connected with it in an unsystematic manner.

He does it, for instance, in his poem 'Kyoto: March'[92] in which he talks about the flakes of snow falling in the feeble sun, birds singing in the cold, the plum buds, the moon, the Jupiter, the dove-cry at dawn, white mountain-tops, green hills, frosty houses, and people's waking and feeding their children and grand-children. In twenty-two lines the poet covers a period of about fourteen hours as the poem begins with the description of what is happening in the afternoon and ends with that of what is happening in the morning. The poem gives the impression that the speaker has spent the whole night meditating or at least watching what is happening around him on the ground and in the sky. The poem is an illustration of the view that the universe is in a state of constant motion and that every moment is the beginning of something or the other. If in the sixth and seventh lines he talks of the moon's beginning, in the last two lines he is talking of the children's waking.

However, Zen thinkers aim at attaining enlightenment for themselves and keep themselves away from political and economic problems. But the Beats are not indifferent to these problems and stand for, for instance, pacifism. Zen monks are apathetic to the affairs of the world and lead secluded lives. But the Beats are not indifferent to what is happening in the political sphere. This is especially true of Ginsberg. The Zen ascetics do not regard narcotics as the means to attain enlightenment, but the Beats do [see *supra*]. Zen Buddhists are not interested in sociological aspects of life, but the Beats are.

NOTES

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3. Thomas F. Merrill, *Allen Ginsberg* (New York: Twayne, 1969), p. 34.
4. Warren Tallman, "Kerouac's Sound" *A Casebook of the Beat* ed., Thomas Parkinson (New York: Thomas Crowell Company 1968 [1961]) pp. 215-29.
5. Lawrence Lipton, *The Holy Barbarians* (New York: Julian Messner, 1959), p. 245.
6. John Tytell, *Naked Angels: The Lives and Literature of the Beat Generation* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), pp. 26-27.
7. Thomas P. Merrill, *Allen Ginsberg* (New York: Twayne, 1969) p. 34.
8. D.T. Suzuki, "Lectures on Zen Buddhism," *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis*, ed. Erich Fromm (New York: Harper, 1970 [1960]), pp. 75-76.
9. *The Gates of Wrath* (Bolinas: Grey Fox Press, 1972), p. 29.
10. *The Explicator* XXXII, 8 (April 1974), p. 9, (page-numbers not printed).
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (London: Rider, 1958 [1953]), p. 119.
13. Thomas F. Merrill, *Allen Ginsberg* (New York: Twayne, 1969), pp. 32-33.
14. Thich Thien-An, *Zen Philosophy, Zen Practice* (Emeryville: Dharma Publishing, 1975), p. 5.
15. Warren Tallman, "Kerouac's Sound," *A Casebook of the Beat*, ed., Thomas Parkinson (New York : Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968 [1961]), p. 226.
16. Lawrence Lipton, *The Holy Barbarians* New York: Julian Messner, 1959), p. 245.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 245.
18. Allen Ginsberg, *Indian Journals* (San Francisco: City Lights and Dave Haselwood, 1971 [1970]), p. 46.
19. Thich Thien-An, *Zen Philosophy, Zen Practice* (Emeryville: Dharma Publishing, 1975), p. 74.

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22. Gray Snyder, *Turtle Island* (New York: New Directions, 1974), p. 61.
23. *Howl and Other Poems* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1978 [1956]), P. 26.
24. Thich Thien-An, *Zen Philosophy, Zen Practice* (Emeryville: Dharma Publishing, 1975), p. 74.
25. *Howl and Other Poems* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1978 [1956]), p. 26.
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28. A Ginsberg, *The Gates of Wrath* (Bolinas: Grey Fox Press, 1972), p. 4.
29. *Visions of Cody* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), p. 341.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 340.
31. Thich Thien-An, *Zen Philosophy, Zen Practice* (Emeryville: Dharma Publishing, 1975), p. 78.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
34. Jack Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums* (New York: Viking, 1972 [1958]), pp. 146-47.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 239.
36. This is what Lord Krsna says when he tells Arjuna, his disciple:

    karmanyevadhikaraste ma phaleshu kadachana

    ma karma phala heturbhurma te sangostwakarmani

    (*The Gita*, II, 47).

    which means: "Action alone is your field, not its result: you should not desire to have the reward of your action, nor should you be in love with non-action."
37. Keith N. Hull, "A Dharma Bum Goes West to Meet the East," *Western American Literature*, XI, 4 (Winter 1977), p. 321.

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39. *Zen Philosophy, Zen Practice* (Emeryville: Dharma Publishing, 1975), p. 124.
40. See Chapter II of this book.
41. D.T. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (London: Rider, 1958 [1953]), p. 91.
42. Gary Snyder, *Regarding Wave* (New York: New Directions, 1970 [1967]), p. 8.
43. Gary Snyder, *Riprap, and Cold Mountain Poems* (San Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation, 1965 [1958]), p. 1.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
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51. *Ibi.*, p. 18.
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56. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
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58. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
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63. Thomas J. Lyon, "The Ecological Vision of Gary Snyder," *Kansas Quarterly*, II, 2 (Spring 1970), p. 123.
64. Gary Snyder, *Riprap and Cold Mountain Poems* (San Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation 1976 [1963]), p. 15.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
66. *Turtle Island* (New York: New Directions, 1974 [1969]), p. 51.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
68. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
72. Gary Snyder, "Buddhism and the Coming Revolution," *The Poetics of the New American Poetry*, ed. Donald M. Allen and Warren Tallman (New York: Grove Press, 1973), p. 394.
73. *Turtle Island* (New York: New Directions, 1974 [1969]), p. 22.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
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82. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
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85. Allen Ginsberg, *Sad Dust Glories: Poems During Work Summer in Woods* (Berkeley: The Working man's Press, 1975), p. 5.
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88. *Scattered Poems* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1972), p. 27.

89. D.T. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (London: Rider, 1958 [1953]), p. 31.

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4

The Vedantic and the Tantric Philosophies in the Beats

The Vedantic views: the non-duality of the Supreme Power, living beings and matter, *Maya*, the transmigration of soul, and *Karma*, the Vedic view of worshipping several gods and goddesses, Tantra, and the ethical principle of doing things in a detached manner find projection in the literary works of the Beats.

One of the Vedantic philosophical beliefs that finds projection in the works of the Beat writers, especially Ginsberg, Snyder and Kerouac is the Upanishadic belief that the whole phenomenon of the universe is nothing more or less than a manifestation of the Supreme Power or Brahman and that basically all beings and things are non-dual even though they appear to be different and independent. This view has been expressed in the *Chhandogya Upanishad* in the sentences: "There is only One and no second"[1] and "Thou art that";[2] in the *Taittiriyopanishad* in the sentence: "After creating this, He entered it";[3] and in the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* in the sentence: "One who makes a distinction between oneself and others does not know."[4] This view finds projection in Ferlinghetti's poems 'True Confessional' and 'Fugitive Configurations'. In the poem 'True Confessional' the speaker says: "I am my son, my mother, my father,/I am born of myself/my own flesh

sucked...."[5] One can find oneself to be one's son, father and mother and be born of himself only when one realises that it is one and the same thing that has taken various forms at various places. It is a realisation of this kind that is embodied in the following sentence of *Taittiriyopanishad:*" I am the grain, I am the grain, I am the grain. I am the eater, I am the eater, I am the eater."[6] The view finds a still more explicit projection in the poem 'Spontaneous Anarchist Pacifist Buddhist Song' where Forlighetti declares that all things, all times, and all entities whether living or non-living are one when he says:

War! War! War!
World! World! World!
Life, Light, Love, Men and Women!
All one
One boat of meat!
Rock rock rock!
Past Present Future All time All one
All places planets things and beings one
All color sound and taste and touch
all one
All form and emptiness
All living entities all sentient beings one
Old Age Annihilation Death and Suffering
All sensation Thought and Tears and Laughter
Ecstasy
Sweet dear words Sweet caresses too
All one![7]

The concept that it is Brahman alone that exists and that it is It that has transformed Itself into many and appears to be many has led the Vedantic philosophers to regard appearances to be illusions and this theory is given the name of *mayavada*. Explaining this view S. Radhakrishnan observes: "The world is God's revelation of Himself. His

joy assumes all these forms. But there is a popular view which identifies the Upanisad doctrine with an abstract monism, which reduces the rich life of this world into an empty dream.... The inexplicability of the relation between the two is assumed by the Upanisads, and the later Vedanta gives to it the name of maya."[8] This view is projected in Ferlinghetti's poem 'Fugitive Configurations' where he calls everything including human beings nothing when he says:

Nothing exists
beyond nothing
We are
nothing
but ephemera scribbled
on a distant landscape
brushed away[9]

The Vedantic view of non-dualism[10] which has been advanced by the non-dualist philosopher when he identifies the known, the knower and knowledge with one another as while explaining a Brahma-Sutra he observes: "By presenting Brahman as not an object on account of Its being the inmost Self (of the knower), they remove the differences of the 'known', the 'knower', and the knowledge that are fancied through ignorance,"[11] is projected in Snyder's poems 'Piute Creek', 'Anasazi', 'The Dazzle' and 'The California Water Plan', the third poem of *The Fudo Trilogy*. In the poem 'Piute Creek' it is by observing nature that Snyder comes to understand that man and the world around him are one and the same thing. In this poem first he describes the hills, the trees and the moonshine and then identifies them with the seer.[12] The declaration looks like a discovery arrived at after meditation on the objects of nature and their relationship with man just as Wordsworth after meditating over the pleasure which he got on seeing

the rainbow in his childhood and youth declares in his rainbow poem that "the child is the father of the man." In the poem 'Anasazi' Snyder calls cliffs Gods, though he does it in a mocking tone like a Zen lunatic when he says: "sinking deeper and deeper in earth/up to your hips in Gods...."[13] In the poem "The Dazzle" he describes how One is still dividing Oneself into many and thus the process on which this universe is based is going on. He says so in lines: "the one/divides itself, divides, and divides again."[14] In the poem 'By Frasier Creek Falls' too Snyder talks of the oneness of life and matter when he says:

> This living flowing land
> is all there is, forever
> We *are* it
> it sings through us—[15]

Here human beings become the mouths of land and their songs become the land's songs.

How God's creatures should behave towards God has been described in the *Gita* in the following way: "Arjun, attribute to me whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever worship you perform, whatever gifts you give, whatever sufferings for a religious cause you undergo."[16] This is the state of absolute merger of the self with the Supreme Being. Snyder shows such a state in his poem 'The California Water Plan' the third poem of *The Fudo Trilogy* and, what is more important, he arrives at this piece of enlightenment through a watching of the behaviour of creeks when the thunderstorm is there. First, he describes how the creeks have been behaving and then comes to what he wishes people to do. The creeks are shown chanting: "Up the sandy trail in a sacred way we come" and, then, rushing down "through banks of flowers, wild onions and lupines."[17] And then he comes to his message which he shows to be what Achala or Fudo wishes people to do:

> Thus he rides out wrath
> and like a craggy peak his lover is Kwannon,
> the creeks that flow and keep back 'nothing'
> til [*sic*] they 'empty' in the sea.[18]

Jack Kerouac introduces characters in his novels who posit their belief in the Upanishadic belief of non-dualism. The concept of one manifesting itself as many appears in the consciousness of Peter who on watching the people of New York feels: "...he knew all these things and they were impressed in his heart, they horrified him. These were only some of the lives of the world, yet all the lives of the world came from the single human soul, and his soul was like their souls."[19] He goes to the extent of realising the oneness of all the creatures of the world and identifies them with himself but does not go to the extent of realising that ultimately all that exists is the manifestation of one and the same entity. In the novel *The Dharma Bums* it is Ray Smith who has attained the consciousness of this kind and leaves Peter behind as Peter identities himself with all the souls while Ray identifies himself with God and says: "'I am God, I am Buddha, I am imperfect Ray Smith, all at the same time, I am empty space, I am all things. I have all the Time in the world from life to life to do what is to do, to do what is done, to do the timeless doing, infinitely perfect within, why cry, why worry, perfect like mind essence and the minds of banana peals...'[20] Ray Smith's belief in non-dualism finds expression in some of his other remarks too. His observation: "'I felt great compassion for the trees because we were the same thing; ...!"[21] is an evidence of the fact that he identifies himself with trees. His realising that "'the mountains were indeed Buddhas'"[22] testifies to the fact that for him there is oneness between inanimate objects and extraordinarily spiritually conscious human beings like Gautama Buddha and, if this logic is extended a little, between all that exists in this universe.

His still more explicit statement is the following one addressed to Rosie: "'But you're getting these silly convictions and conceptions out of nowhere, don't you realise all this life is just a dream? Why don't you just relax and enjoy God? God is You, You fool!'"[23] And when all these remarks are put side by side they evidence the fact that if he finds oneness between man and trees, he also finds oneness between man and God, and thus God, man and inanimate objects have been regarded as non-duals.

Ray Smith does not stop here but goes further to assert: "'Everybody knows everything'"[24] This is again a claim based on the Vedantic philosophy which holds that the whole knowledge lies within a man and not without him. This view is embodied in the following words of Swami Vivekananda: "The powers of the mind should be concentrated and turned back upon itself, and as the darkest place reveal their secrets before the penetrating rays of the sun, so will this concentrated mind penetrate its own innermost secrets.... We will perceive for ourselves whether we have souls, whether life is of five minutes, or of eternity, whether there is a God in the Universe or none."[25] And the view implies that knowledge is not to be gained from without, but it is already there within a man and that a man has to seek all knowledge within himself.

In the novel *Desolation Angels* too non-dualism finds projection in the passage:" '...we fare as we fare and part for ever as we part—Only to come back again in some other form, as form, the essence of our 3 [*sic*] respective beings has certainly not 3 [*sic*] forms, it just passes through—So it's all God and we the mind-angels, so bless and sit down—'"[26] because it has been said here that it is all God. The same is the case with the passage: "'Whatever happens to me down that trail to the world is allright with me because I am God and I'm doing it all myself, who else?'"[27]

as here the speaker calls himself God. And so is the case with the passage:" 'I young Witchdoctor have been instructed by the Three Old Witchdoctors to keep silent, for nothing matters, we're all Immortal Buddhas Who Know Silence, so I calm up, and there's a long silence as the good car sings [*sic*] along....'"[28] Here the word 'Buddha' has been used in the sense of an enlightened human being.

The narrator in *Desolation Angels* realises that it is he who has "changed and done all this and come and gone and complained and hurt and joyed and yelled, not the Void".[29] This realisation implies that he finds non-duality between the Creator and the created, as a man can identify himself with one who has changed and also with one who has yelled and complained only when he realises the non-duality of God, the soul and the matter. At another time he says to himself: "'When I get to the top of Desolation Peak and every body leaves on mules and I'm alone I will come face to face with God or Tathagata and find out once and for all what is the meaning of all existence and suffering and going to and fro in vain....'"[30] This state of coming face to face with God and realising the futility of being born and dying again and again is the state of the attainment of enlightenment.

So far as Ginsberg is concerned, the view finds expression in a large number of his poems including 'Howl', 'TV Baby', 'New York to San Fran', 'Kenji Miyasawa', 'Kaddish', 'A Vision in Hollywood', 'Fragment 1956', 'Lysergic Acid', 'The End', and 'Wales Visitation'. In 'T.V. Baby' which is an anti-war and anti-T.V.—propaganda poem he declares: "I am the One, you are the One, A Hitler's One as fast as his Many [*sic*] heavenly Jews are reborn,...."[31] and suggests that it is the realisation of the oneness of all beings and things that can solve the problem of war. It is this stage that is talked about in the lines: "...I

am taking drugs/and leap at my postman for more correspondence, man is leaving the earth in a rocket ship,/ there is a mutation of the race, we are no longer human beings, we are one being, we are being connected to itself,...."[32] What is curious about this passage is the fact that it is the taking of drugs that brings the speaker into the state of realising this oneness of all! In the poem 'Kenji Miyasawa' he finds the wind, the trees and himself to be one when, after talking about the sound that the wind is producing, he asserts: "It's treetops, whatever they think,/ It's no, whatever I think,/It's the wind talking."[33]

The same view finds projection in Ginsberg's poem 'Fragment 1956' in which he says: "Soul identical each to each, as standing on/the streetcorner ten years ago I looked at Jack/and told him we were the same person—look/in my eyes and speak to yourself,...."[34] as the speaker finds all souls to be identical and tells Jack that both of them are the same person. Here the consciousness of non-duality is confined to the souls and has not yet included either the matter or the Ultimate Reality. It is in the poem 'Lysergic Acid' that he explains his metaphysics and explains how it is One who has become many in such a way that all the beings and objects are one and still different from one another. The lines in which he says that it is O or Aum which has created large images of itself are:

> This image or energy which reproduces itself as the depths of space from the very Beginning in what might be an O or an Aum and trailing variations made of the same Word circles round itself in the same pattern as its original Appearance [*sic*] creating a large image of itself throughout depths of Time outward circling thru bands of far off Nebulae....[35]

The view is embodied in the interpretation of the fifth *Brahmasutra* given in the following words: "The *Upanisads* teach thus: starting with the text, 'O amiable one, before its creation, the universe was but Existence (*Brahman*), one without a second' (*Chhandogyaupanisad* VI, ii, 1), it is stated. 'That (Brahman) visualised, 'I shall become many, I shall be born.'"[36] In this poem Ginsberg also observes that the objects and beings in which the One transforms Oneself are one and yet different. He says so in the lines:

> the billion-eyed monster, the Nameless, the Answerless, the Hidden-from-me, the endless Being
> one creature that gives birth to itself
> thrills in its minutest particular, sees out of all eyes differently at once
> One and not One moves on its own ways....[37]

In the poem 'The End' the poet identifies himself with the Fisheye, the worm, the serpent, the oak, the rose and says: "I am I, old Father Fisheye that begot the ocean, the worm at my own ear, the serpent turning around a tree,...."[38] And in 'Wales Visitation' he sees the vision of One in the curls of smoke and records: "What did I notice? Particulars! The vision of the great One in myriad—smoke curls upward from ash tray,..."[39] In 'Notes For Strots to Kali as Statue of Liberty' he identifies Liberty with Kali, then with the whole universe and, at last, with himself and finds himself to be omnipresent when he says:

> I am this ten armed Durga
> red tongued Kali movie of Elephant
> headed gods [*sic*]—Ganesh
> traveling [*Sic*] through space
> always the same place There is my movie
> I am everywhere[40]

Likewise, the following entry in his *Indian Journals* makes it evident that the poet identifies himself with the Ultimate Reality and asks the question whether there exists anyone but He when he says: "Kali, Durga, Ram, Hari, Krishna, Brahma, Buddha, Allah, Jaweh, Christ, Mazda, Coyote, hear my plea!/Avaloketesvara, Maitreya, St. John, Ho-Tei, Kuan-Yin, Satan, Dipankara, Padma Sambava—whoever there is—is there ever anyone but me?"[41] In 'Kaddish' he identifies himself with his dead mother and finds her grave to be his own when he says: "I've seen your grave! O strange Naomi!/My own-cracked grave!"[42] In 'Howl' Ginsberg adopts a different way to project the non-dual philosophy: in the main body of the poem he shows people being oppressed in the American society, but in its 'Footnote' he declares everything to be holy when he says: "The world is holy! the soul is holy! The skin is holy! The nose is holy!..."[43] Everything can be considered holy only if it is the manifestation of God who is holy.

Thomas P. Merrill considers Allen Ginsberg to be a maker of 'an instrument of spiritual communication' rather than poetry, and, in order to explain that the word 'mysticism' does not correctly describe his field, observes; "Even the word 'mysticism', in its formal definition, fails to do justice to the phenomenon that Ginsberg describes simply because one is almost overwhelmed by the enormity of the ego lurking behind his words. Mysticism involves the annihilation of ego in communication with the Holy."[44] But the fact is that Ginsberg's realising that God and man are one has made him write poems of this kind. And mysticism does not involve the annihilation of ego; on the contrary, it involves a man's realising that human soul is not unconnected with God and this implies that a man becomes conscious of his spiritual significance and greatness. What is more significant for a critic to stress is the fact that a mystic's ego is the result of his realising that man and

God are not unconnected and different beings.

The Vedantic concept of Maya which regards the universe as something apparent rather than real[45] has found projection in the works of Ginsberg and Kerouac. In Kerouac's *Desolation Angels Maya* is regarded as making people take an unreal phenomenon to be a real one and it has been pointed out there like this: "'And that is precisely what Maya means, it means we're being fooled into believing in the reality of the feeling of the show of things—Maya in Sanskrit,' it means *wile*—And why do we go on being fooled even when we know it?—Because of the energy of our habit and we hand it down from chromosome to chromosome to our children but even when the last living thing on earth is sucking at the last drop of water at this base of equatorial ice fields the energy of the habit of Maya will be in the world, embued right in rock and scale—"[46] Likewise this concept finds projection in Ginsberg's poem 'A Vision in Hollywood' in the lines: "This universe a thing of dream/substance naught and Keystone Void/ vibrations of symmetry Yes No"[47] Gary Snyder too has a poem on Maya to his credit.[48]

Ginsberg's belief in the concept of Maya finds expression in 'Mandala' which is a part of the poem 'Lysergic Acid' where he describes what one perceives when the curtain of Maya is removed:

> Gods dance on their own bodies
> New Flowers open forgetting Death
> Celestial eyes beyond the heartbreak of illusion
> I see the gay Creator
> Bands rise up in anthem to the worlds
> Flags and banners waving in transcendence
> One image in the end remains myriad eyed in
> Eternity

> This it the Work! This is Knowledge! This is the End of man![49]

A more explicit acceptance of this concept appears in the poem 'Laughing Gas' when the poet says: "The universe is a void in which there is a dreamhole/The dream disappears the hole closes"[50] and tries to give the concept a visual form.

In Kerouac's novel *Visions of Cody* the concept is made the part of a character's realisation when he says: "'I had just suddenly realised I had just seen a very successful young American off on a plane, (an executive he was) that nothing in the world matters; not even success in America but just void and emptiness awaits the career of the soul of a man.'"[51] Likewise, he does it in the novel *Desolation Angels* when he makes a character say: "'O Ignorant brothers, O Ignorant sisters, O Ignorant me! there's nothing to write about, everything is nothing, there's everything to write about.'[52] Admitting that nothing matters implies that what appears to be happening is not happening in the real sense of the word. The same is the implication of saying that everything is nothing. In this universe everything goes on changing constantly and if one does not pay attention to God and soul, one is likely to feel sad on seeing that every thing is transitory and that there is nothing that can give one a ground to stand on. The worldly possessions are highly valued by the materialists who devote their energies to acquiring and possessing as many comforts and luxuries as they can. And a dislike for the material possessions is an unexpected thing in the writings of the Westerners who have been building empires, enslaving people and telling people that it is the white man's burden to civilise people. One has to realise that material wealth is no wealth at all. As beautiful dresses cannot bring a dead human body back to life, in the same way material achievements or

losses do not matter for a soul which has been changing bodies just as a man changes dresses. There was once a world conqueror named Alexander but now there is not even a single trace of the man on the surface of the earth. Napoleons, Hitlers, Mao Tse Tungs and Muhammad Gauris are today no more than names. The people who appeared to be controlling the world in their days have left nothing but their names behind. That is why it is essential to regard all that is happening in the world as Maya, or illusion because if one loses oneself in it, one may not be able to keep oneself absolutely truthful, just and righteous. But if a man begins to believe that the world is Maya, that it is the purity of soul that is a man's primary care and that he should regard God's pleasure to be his only aim, he is very likely to save himself from the temptations of material, religious, political and other such gains in the same way as Jesus Christ did when Satan tempted him to ask stones to become bread, to become the priest of a temple and to become the owner of a kingdom.[53]

The concept of Maya is closely associated with the theory of the transmigration of the soul or the view that a soul is immortal and that it enters a new body when it finds the old one to have been worn out. This theory has been explained by Krsna in the *Gita* when he teaches Arjuna: "Just as a man discards old clothes and puts on new ones, in the same way a soul discards an old body and enters a now one."[54] This view finds projection in the works of Ginsberg, Snyder and Kerouac. Some of Ginsberg's poems in which it finds embodiment are 'Laughing Gas', 'In Death, Cannot Reach What is Most Near', 'Mascaline', 'Poem Rocket', 'Falling Asleep in America', and 'Metaphysics'. In the poem 'Laughing Gas' Ginsberg says:

> Relax and die—
> The process will repeat itself

Be Born! Be Born!
Back to the same old smiling
dentist—[55]

In the poem 'In Death, Cannot Reach What is Most Near' he regards this life as a passage between two doors of darkness and says:

We know all about death that
we will ever know because
we have all experienced
the state before birth.[56]

The statement that we have experienced the state before birth and know about death all that we can implies that we have not been born for the first time and after death will not wait for the Day of Judgment in graves. Thomas F. Merrill interprets these lines in terms of existentialism and comments on them: "Because there is no cognition before birth, it seems clear that one can know nothing of death. Death becomes a shadowy, ineffable blackness which frames human existence."[57] But he does not pay attention to the fact that they signify Ginsberg's accepting the Hindu concept of the transmigration of soul and that they do not simply signify that we cannot know more of death than we do, but also imply that Ginsberg is not in the state of having no metaphysics at all but has allowed himself to accept that the soul goes from one body to another and that the life we are leading is, not our first life. Ginsberg does it in his poem 'Mascaline' also where he asks: "...are you prepared to be reborn..."[58] which implies that rebirth is a fact rather than fiction. And so does he do in the poem 'Poem Rocket' where he says: "O possible moon in Heaven we get to first of ageless constellation of names/as God is possible as All [*sic*] is possible so we'll reach another life."[59] What happens to a soul after death is speculated on by Ginsberg in his

poem 'Falling Asleep in America' when he says: "Each million years atoms spin myriad reversals, world in worlds interchange populations—/from worm to man's a tiny jump from earth to earth souls are borne ever forgetful—"[60]

It is in the following poem of Gary Snyder that the theory of the transmigration of soul finds projection:"

Arms shielding my face
Knees drawn up
Falling through flicker
Of womb after womb,
    through worlds,
Only begging, Mother,
    must I be born again?
Snyder says: you bear me, nurse me
I meet you, always love you,
    you dance
    on my chest and thigh
Forever born again.[61]

Likewise, in 'Bojang's Big Lecture' the view finds expression when Snyder writes: "Going or staying without obstruction; entering into or coming out of Birth-and-Death is like going through opening gates. Even when that mind meets with various sorts of suffering and things that go wrong, that mind does not retreat groveling."[62] Here again the cycle of birth-and-death is shown to be a misery-causing affair and in the lines quoted above the poet gives utterance to the speaker's desire to attain liberation from the chains of this cycle.

The view that God incarnates Himself finds projection in Gary Snyder's poem, 'Smokey the Bear Sutra' where he shows Lord Buddha giving a discourse that he will enter the form of Smokey the Bear in some future age when

America will have great centres of power and the mankind will get into trouble. The concept of God's incarnating Himself in order to help the virtuous is foreign to the Christian doctrine. This view, however, has been explicitly mentioned in the *Gita* where Lord Krsna says to Arjuna: "I incarnate Myself in age after age in order to help the virtuous and to wipe out the vicious, and to make people have faith in the Right Path."[63] Jesus Christ simply sacrificed himself for the sins of man and did not make any distinction between the good and the bad.

This theory is accepted by a few characters of Jack Kerouac too. It is Japhy Rider in *The Dharma Bums* who accepts the theory and says: "'...when I discovered Buddhism and all I suddenly felt that I had lived in a previous lifetime innumerable ages ago and now because of faults and sins in that lifetime I was being degraded to a more grievous domain of existence and my Karma was to be born in America where nobody has any fun or believes in anything, especially freedom.'"[64] In this novel Bud is another character who accepts this belief and says: "' Seems like in some previous lifetime, Ray, ...you and I were monks in some monastery in Tibet....'[65] In *On the Road* it is Sal Paradise who realises that he has had a former life when he says: "'It seemed I had a whole host of memories leading back to 1750 in England and that I was in San Francisco now only in another life and in another body.'[66] He also tries to explain as to what causes a new birth and how a transition takes place: "'I realised that I had died and been reborn numberless times but just didn't remember especially because the transitions from life to death and back to life are so ghostly easy, a magical action for naught, like falling asleep and waking up again, a million times, the utter casualness and deep ignorance of it. I realised it was only because of the stability of the intrinsic Mind that these ripples of birth and death took place, like the action

of wind on a sheet of pure, serene, mirror-like water.'"[67] This doctrine has found expression in Kerouac's novel *Visions of Gerard* in the statement: "'Brothers that were saints that died on me, that too's happened a million times in a million repetitions and reincarnations in Samsara's sorrow parade—'"[68] It is also projected when in the poem 'Sept. 16, 1961, Poem' the mother of the speaker says: "'death is nothing to worry about, from this life we start to another."[69] When Lord Krsna explains to Arjuna what death is, He tells him that death is another stage of the transformation of the body and that just as a body passes through childhood, youth, and old age, it also attains old age; that is why wise men are not disturbed to see its changing forms, including death.[70]

The doctrine of *karma* according to which a man's own deeds determine his future not only in this life but also in the subsequent ones has found favour with the Beats. This doctrine is one of the fundamental doctrines on which the Hindu philosophy is founded. This doctrine has been talked of in many of the Hindu scriptures. For example, in Rgveda the sage asserts: "Hymns, if chanted by wise learned persons bring them in their next lives virtuous happiness through fair methods."[71] and thus embodies herein the view that noble actions bring rewards while vicious deeds are accompanied by punishments. The view finds projection in Kerouac's poem entitled 'Poem' where he regards rebirth as both punishment and reward when the speaker says:

> And as a punishment and [*sic*] reward
> for making this plea I know
> I'll be reborn
> the last human
> Everybody else dead and I'm
> an old woman roaming the earth

groaning in caves
sleeping on mats[72]

The speaker imagines himself to have been born again and to be undergoing punishment for his evil deeds.

In his novel *The Dharma Bums* it is Morley who posits his belief in this doctrine and says: "'Now there's the Karma of these three men here: Japhy Ryder gets to his triumphant mountaintop and makes it, I almost make it and have to give up and huddle in a bloody cave, but the smartest of them all is that poet's poet lyin [*sic*] down there with his knees crossed to the sky chewing on a flower dreaming by a gurgling *plage*, goddammit they'll never get me up here again.'"[73] And in *Visions of Gerard* it is the narrator who does it by saying: "'It's like remembering before you were born and your hap was at hand and karma forced you out to start the story."[74]

Allen Ginsberg posits his faith in this doctrine in the poems 'Aether', and 'Elegy for Neal Cassady'. In 'Aether' he does so when he says: "Men with slick mustaches of mystery have pimp horrible climaxes and [*sic*] Karmas—"[75] This is the poem in which he calls the Creator of the universe a 'mad magician' and the world 'this Hell of Birth and Death'.[76] In the poem 'Elegy for Neal Cassady' first, he asks what has become to Neal Cassady's soul and then comes to the explanation of the problem: "Lament in dawnlight's not needed, the world is released, desire fulfilled, your history over, story told, Karma resolved prayers completed/ Vision manifest, new consciousness fulfilled, spirit returned in a circle,...."[77] This implies that Ginsberg posits his belief in the theory that a man's soul gets another body in accordance with his deeds and views.

The doctrine also finds projection in a few poems of Snyder. For instance, in the poem 'December at Yase' he

says: "And may never know/If I am a fool/Or have done what my Karma demands."[78] Here the poet makes Karma something responsible for predestination. Likewise, the doctrine is projected in the seventeenth of 'Twenty Four Poems by Hen-chan' where the poet says:

> If I hide out at Cold Mountain
> Living off mountain plants and berries—
> All my lifetime, why worry?
> One follows his Karma through.[79]

But here the poet has come to a wrong conclusion. The Karma theory implies that man is a free agent so long as he has not done a thing but the moment he has done it, he ceases to remain free and will have to undergo its consequences whether they are sweet or bitter; however, it does not mean that he has to do nothing at all, because his future will be the outcome of what he has been doing and what he is doing at the moment; if he chooses to remain idle, he will make his future dark. In fact, the moral of the doctrine is that a man is helpless so far as his past deeds are concerned but he is not so so far as the present time is concerned, and that if he resolves to do what is noble and to fight against the ignoble forces, he will definitely have a happy future in this life or in some next one. To come to believe that the karma theory stands for inaction or idleness is to come to a wrong inference. Since the speaker in this poem comes to the conclusion that he should not worry and should spend the whole of his life at Cold Mountain, he makes a wrong choice because the karma doctrine wishes a man to work hard without caring for the reward. Lord Krishna teaches Arjuna in the *Gita*: "'Arjuna, engage yourself in action with your full capacities but do not identify yourself with it and treat both success and failure alike; such a behaviour is called the whole-hearted action based on the evenness of mentality.'"[80] In 'December at

Yase' Snyder makes Karma something responsible for predestination. One of the basic differences between Buddhism and Hinduism is the fact the Buddhism does not recognise any immortal and unchanging reality in the universe and stresses the fact that everything is constantly changing,[81] but Hinduism, especially, the Upanishadic philosophy, does not pay as much attention to the changes as to the unchanging reality. When Arjuna refuses to fight on the ground that he will not like to kill his near kinsmen, and thus he pays attention to the spatio-temporal reality, Lord Krsna directs his attention to the eternal reality when he tells him: "'Never was there a time when I was not, nor thou, nor these lords of men, nor will there ever be a time hereafter when we all shall cease to be."[82] Such a fact too has been accepted by the poet of the seventeenth of the Cold Mountain poems when he says: "'Go ahead and let the world change—I'm happy to sit among these cliffs."[83] Here by saying 'let the world change' the speaker brushes away the Buddhist anxiety of the momentariness of life.

The Beats frequently refer to the Hindu gods and goddesses. Snyder, for instance, devotes one whole section of the book *The Back country* to the goddess Kali. Likewise Allen Ginsberg in 'Notes for Stotras to Kali as Statue of Liberty' makes Kali the spirit of liberty with the heads of all the oppressors in the necklace of human skulls and makes her perform the cosmic dance. In the fifteenth poem of *Myths and Texts (Logging)* Snyder accepts the Hindu view that Lord Shiva destroys the universe at the end of a *Kalpa* and says: "Shiva at the end of the Kalpa:/Rock-fat, hill-flesh, gone in a whiff."[84] Likewise, he describes goddess Kali in the following words:

> On a corpse/dread/laughing/
> four arms/a sword/a severed head/
> removing fear/giving/
> wearing skulls/black/naked[85]

and Shiva and Shakti in the poem 'The Manichaeans': "...dreaming as Shiva and Shakti / And keep back the cold.[86] It is Shakti or Kali the Tantric Goddess that Snyder is talking of in the poem 'The Great Mother' and suggests that she does not like cruel and savage deeds when he says:

> Not all those who pass
> In front of the Great Mother's chair
> Get passed with only a stare
> Some she looks at their hands
> To see what sort of savages they were.[87]

Here Snyder has reconciled Tantra, Buddhism and Christianity as the Great Mother he talks of is worshipped by the Tantrics, her disliking savagery which implies the acceptance of the value of non-violence is a Buddhistic characteristic and her behaving like a judge joins her with the Judaic-Christian-Muslim God administering justice on the Day of Judgment. Goddess Kali is a Tantric deity about whom Chintaharan Chakravarty observes: "In her most popular form of Daksinakalika, the deity is fearful, has four hands and a gruesome face and is black as a cloud. She is adorned with a garland of human heads. Her body is smeared with the blood oozing from these heads. Two corpses constitute her ear ornaments. Her girdle is formed by the hands of dead bodies. She holds in her two left hands a freshly severed head and a sword and her two right hands are in the posture of *abhaya* (freedom from fear) and *varada* (bestowing gifts)."[88]

Jack Kerouac mentions 'OM', in his poem 'More Old Angel Midnight':

> The boy on the sandbank blooming the moon,
> The sound won't let me sleep and since I
> found out time is silence Manjusri won't

let me hear the swash of snow in ole no po
no mo

O A M
Oh O M[89]

'OM' is one of the names of God and in this passage the poet starts repeating 'Om' as a prayer in a state when "the sound" does not let him sleep. This kind of praying has nothing to do with Buddhism or Zen Buddhism. It is something purely Vedic. Kerouac's Francis in his novel *The Town and the City*, likewise, behaves like a worshipper of Lord Vishnu when he says: "'...I shall simply stay here and contemplate Vishnu'"[90]

In the poem 'For Sale/For Sale' Allen Ginsberg declares every thing ranging from himself to America and the whole of the creation itself to be for sale.[91] This is the stage of having no desires and attaining the mental state of a *sthitaprajna* who is above worldly desires.[92] The same state is the aim of the speaker in the poem 'What Would You Do If You Lost It?' in which the poet shows a man bidding good-bye to various persons, ideas and things including Broadway, Naomi, America, Heaven, Nirvana, and Ardinarihahvara Radha Harekrishna and ending the poem with the words: "None left standing! No tears left for eyes, no eyes for weeping, no mouth for singing, no song for the hearer, no more words for any mind."[93]

The Hindu view that women be respected finds utterance in the following couplet from *Manu Smriti:*

Yatra naryastu pujyante ramante tatra devata
yatraitastu na pujyante sarvastatraphalah kriya.
(III, 56)

which means 'gods love to stay at the place where women are honoured and all achievements prove to be of no use

at the place where they are humilitated,' finds expression in Kerouac's novel *On the Road* in the speech of Sal who observes: "'My aunt once said the world would never find peace until men fell at their women's feet and asked for forgiveness.'[94] This utterance is foreign to the way women are treated in the works of W. Scott, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy, Fitzgerald and John Updike. It is surprising that a character talks of the need of the world's falling at women's feet and asking for forgiveness. And since a right thing has been mentioned here, the surprise is pleasant.

The *Tantric* philosophy which believes in the efficacy of the *mantras* and *tantras*[95] finds projection in 'Spel Against Demons' where ACHALA, the Immovable is said to have a Spel:

> *Down* with demonic killers who mouth revolutionary slogans and muddy the flow of change, may they be Bound by the Noose, and Instructed by the Diamond Sword of ACHALA the Immovable, Lord of Wisdom, Lord of Heat, who is squint-eyed and whose face is terrible with bare fangs, who wears on his crown a garland of severed heads, clad in a tiger-skin, he who turns Wrath to Purified Accomplishment,
>
> whose powers are of lava,
> of magma, of deep rock strata, of gunpowder,
> and the Sun
>
> He who saves tortured intelligent demons and filth-eating hungry ghosts, his spel is,
>
> NAMAH SAMANTAH VAJRANAM CHANDA
> MAHAROSHANA
> SPHATAYA HUM TRAKA HAM
> MAM[96]

The yogis believe in the existence of six centres or *chakras* in the human body and the energy called the *Kundalini Sakti,* by arousing which one can gain extraordinary capacities.[97] One of them is referred to in Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums* in Japhy's speech: "'...when you go to sleep you should put your legs together and take deep breathe and then concentrate your mind on a spot one and a half inches below your naval until you feel it get like a ball of power and then start breathing from your heels clear up and concentrate saying to yourself that center just here is Amida's Pure Land, the center of the mind, and when you wake up you should start by consciously breathing and stretching a little and thinking the same thoughts, see, the rest of the time."[98] Kerouac's description makes it evident that the novelist is familiar with the yogic practices. Kerouac substitutes Vishnu by Amida, the Chinese form of the Sanskrita word Amitabha, a name of Gautam Buddha. Gary Snyder alludes to the yoga system of Patanjali in *Earth House Hold,* when he says: "Must learn yoga-system of Patanjali—"[99] Ginsberg mentions *Abhaya Mudra* in his poem *Ankor-Vat* when he says: "you have no right being a Hitler repeating that/Abhaya mudra reassurance/Palm out flat, patting the airhide of earth."[100] His mentioning this *Mudra* goes to prove that the poet believes in people's being able to achieve the desired ends through *mudras.*

In the line "LSD Shakti-snake settles like gas into Consciousness" in the poem "These States, Into L.A."[101] Ginsberg refers to the Tantric belief that man has *Kundalini* or serpent power which, if awakened, will travel upward in the spinal chord through the *Sushumna* path and enter the *Sahasrar Chakra. Kundalini* has been likened by the Tantrics to the spiral of the conch-shell and it has been said that her shining snake-like form goes three and a half times round Siva.[102]

It is Ray Smith in *The Dharma Bums* who tries to reach the yogic stage of *samadhi.* He talks of his discussion on *samadhi* with Alvah in the passage: "'He was always being bugged by my little lectures on Samadhi ecstasy, which is the state you reach when you stop everything and stop your mind and you actually with your eyes closed see a kind of eternal multiswarm of electric Power [*sic*] of some ululating in place of just pitiful images and forms of objects, which are, after all, imaginary."[103] The Tantrics too stress the non-duality of the worshipper and the worshipped. The fact has been mentioned by Chintaharan Chakravarty in his book *Tantras: Studies on Religion and Literature:* "Stress is laid on the attempt at realisation of the identity of the worshipper, and the worshipped, and the individual soul and the supreme soul at various stages of the worship. *Buta suddhi* which aims at purifying the body of the worshipper involves a yogic process beginning with a meditation of this identity".[104] And so do the Beats.

'Om' is one of the names of the Ultimate Power used by the Hindus. Ferlinghetti too uses this word in his poem 'Airport Mantra' and says:

Plane says Om
Sky says Om
Sun says Om Om
When will America sing it
When will America utter it
Om is He who is meat and air
Om is She who is Light
Om is Universe spinning
Sound of universe singing
Love-sound of Om
Sigh-cry of Om
Mutter and moan of Om Om
Breath of life which is Om

> Om America unknown
> singeth in the void.[105]

The poem evidences the fact that the poet has accepted the Hindu view that God be addressed as Om.[106]

Snyder believes that the chanting of mantras can help a man to achieve the desired ends. This fact is evidenced by the following lines from his poem 'Smokey the Bear Sutra':

> ... if anyone is threatened by advertising, air pollution, or the police, they should chant SMOKEY THE
>
> BEAR'S WAR SPELL:
> DROWN THEIR BUTTS
> CRUSH THEIR BUTTS[107]

Snyder even explains how the chanting of the mantras helps a man: "In mantra chanting, the magic utterances, built of seed-syllables such as OM and AYNG and AH, repeated over and over, fold and curl on the breath until—when most weary and bored—a new voice enters, a voice speaks, a voice speaks through you clearer and stronger than what you know of yourself; with a sureness and melody of its own, singing out the inner song of the self, and of the planet."[108] How the chanting of the mantras leads a man to have spiritual feelings and wish for peace is shown by Ginsberg in his poem 'Wings Lifted Over the Black Pit':

> Chanting Mantras all the way
> Hare Krishna etc.
> Till dinner, great Lake below,
> Heard a sweet drone in the plane-whine
> Hari Om Namo Shivaye—So

Made my own music
American Mantra—
"Peace in Chicago
Peace in Saigon—"[109]

This is also done in *Ankor-Wat* where Ginsberg shows a man chanting:

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama
Rama Rama Hare Hare.[110]

He refers to the practice of chanting mantras in his poem "Beginning of a Poem of these States' when he writes: "Rifles and [*sic*] cyanide bombs unavailing—he looked real surprised and [*sic*] pointed his thin nose in our direction. Hari Om Namo Shivaye!"[111]

Ginsberg does not believe, unlike the Christians, that after death one has to wait for the Day of Judgment. On the contrary he believes that death takes one back to the source. He says so in his poem 'This is About Death' when he observes: "Only return of activity/to its source will complete/activity."[112] Here the poet is justifying death against the assertions and claims of life though he is conscious of the fact that "Being is the one thing/all the universe shouts."[113] Brahman is regarded as the source of the whole universe in the *Ishavasasyopanishad* where it has been said that "Brahman is perfect, this creation of Brahman is perfect because only the perfect can come out of the perfect. And when the perfectness of the perfect is taken away, the perfect is left behind."[114]

However, the Beats' attitude towards narcotics is different from that of the upholders of the Vedic philosophy. Valmiki, the author of *Ramayana*, the Sanskrta epic makes

Lakshamana declare that consuming intoxicating drugs is an obstacle in a man's movement towards *dharma*, money, desire, and spiritual liberation, the four goals of life, when he says: "The practice of consuming intoxicating drugs cannot be considered desirable for a man if he wishes to attain *dharma* and money because his *dharma*, money and desire are lost by consuming these drugs.[115] But the Beats believe intoxicating drugs to be a means to achieve spiritual enlightenment.

NOTES

1. The Sanskrta sentence is: *"ekamevadwitiyam" (Chhandogya Upanishad* VI, ii, 1.)
2. The Sanskrta sentence is: *"tattwamasi" (Chhandogya Upanishad* VI, viii, 16.)
3. The Sanskrta sentence is: *"tatsrishtwa tadeyanupravishta" (Taittiriyopanishad* II, vi, 1).
4. The Sanskrta sentence is: *"anyasavanyo hamasmiti na sa veda" (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* I, iv, 10).
5. "True Confessional", *Open Eye. Open Heart* (New York: New Directions, 1973 [1961]), p. 4.
6. The Sanskrta sentence is: *"ahamannam ahamannam ahamannam, ahamannado ahamannado ahamannadah" (Taittiriyopanishad* III, X, 6).
7. *Open Eye. Open Heart* (New York: New Directions, 1973 [1961]), pp. 130-31.
8. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 1 (London: George Allen, 1966, eighth impression [1923]), p. 186.
9. *Open Eye. Open Heart* (New York: New Directions, 1973 [1961]), p. 21.
10. This view has also been accepted by the Zen philosophers.
11. *Brahma Sutra-Bhasya of Sri Sankaracarya*, Trans. Swami Gambhiranand (Calcutta: Advaita Ashram, 1972 second edition), p. 31.
12. *The Contemporary American Poets: American Poetry Since 1940*, ed. Mark Strand (New York and Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., 1969), p. 307.

13. *Turtle Island* (New York: New Directions, 1974 [1969]), p. 3.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
16. The Sanskrta couplet is:

    yatkaroshi, yadshnasi, yaijuhoshi, dadasiyat
    yattapasyasi Kaunteya tatkurushwa madarpanam.
    (*The Gita* IX, 27)
17. Gary Snyder, *The Fudo Trilogy* (Berkeley: Shaman Drum, 1975), p. 13.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
19. *The Town and the City* (New York: The Universal Library, Grosset and Dunlap, 1950), pp. 363-364.
20. *The Dharma Bums* (New York: Viking, 1972 [1958]), p. 122.
21. *The Dharma Bums* (London: Mayflower, 1965 [1958]), p. 106.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
24. *Ibid.*, (New York: Viking, 1972 [1958]), p. 139.
25. *Selections from Swami Vivekanand* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashram, 1975), p. 66.
26. Jack Kerouac, *Desolation Angels* (New York; Coward—McCann, Inc. 1965 [1960]), p. 84.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
31. *T.V. Baby* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1968), p. 1 (page-number not printed).
32. *Ibid.*, p. 9 (not printed).
33. *Sad Dust Glories* (Berkeley: Workingman's Press, 1975), p. 16.
34. *Reality Sandwiches 1953-60* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1970 [1963] Tenth Printing), p. 51.
35. Allen Ginsberg, *Kaddish and other Poems* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1970, eleventh printing [1961]), p. 88.
36. *Brahma-Sutra-Bhasya of Sankaracarya*, trans. Swami Gambhirananda (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1972, second edition), p. 47.

37. Allen Ginsberg, *Kaddish and other Poems* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1970, Eleventh Printing [1961]), p. 89.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
39. *New Yorker* XLIV, 12 (11 May 1968), p. 45.
40. *Indian Journals* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1971 [1970]), p. 18.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
42. *Kaddish and Other Poems* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1970, eleventh printing [1961]), p. 27.
43. *Howl and Other Poems* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1957), p. 21.
44. *Allen Ginsberg* (New York: Twayne, 1969), p. 60.
45. Swami Vivekananda explains it like this: "Thus we find that Maya is not a theory for the explanation of the world: it is simply a statement of facts as they exist, that the very basis of our being is contradiction, that everywhere we have to move through this tremendous contradiction, that wherever there is good, there must also be evil, and wherever there is evil, there must be some good, wherever there is life, death must follow as its shadow, and every one who smiles will have to weep, and vice versa." (*Selections from Swami Vivekananda* [Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1975 sixth edition], p. 109).
46. Jack Kerouac, *Desolation Angels* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1965 [1960]), p. 50.
47. *Planet News* 1961-1967 (San Francisco: City Lights, 1968), p. 106.
48. *The Back Country* (New York: New Directions, 1968 [1957]), p. 82.
49. Allen Ginsberg, *Kaddish and Other Poems 1958-1960* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1970 [1961] eleventh printing), pp. 90-91.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
51. *Vision of Cody* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), p. 292.
52. *Desolation Angels* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1965 [1960]), p. 50.
53. *St. Luke* IV, 1-13.
54. *Vasansi jeernani yatha vihaya navani grahnati naroparani, tatha shareerani vihaya jeernanyanyani sanyati navanidehi. The Gita* II, 22.
55. *Kaddish and Other Poems 1958-1960* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1970 eleventh printing [1961]), p. 68.

56. *Empty Mirror* (New York: Totem Press, 1961), p. 15.
57. *Allen Ginsberg* (New York: Twayne, 1969), p. 75.
58. A Ginsberg, *Kaddish and Other Poems* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1970, eleventh impression [1961]), p. 85.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
60. *The Fall of America* (New York: City Lights, 1972), p. 114.
61. Gary Snyder, *The Back Country* (New York: The New Directions, 1968 [1957]), p. 94.
62. *Earth House Hold: Technical Notes and Queries to Fellow Dharma Revolutionaries* (New York: New Directions, 1969 [1957]), p. 75.
63. The Sanskrta Couplet is:

    "paritranaya sadhunam vinashaya cha dushkratam
    dharma sansthapanarthaya sambhavami yuge yuge."
    (The *Gita* IV, 8).
64. *The Dharma Bums* (London: Mayflower, 1965 [1958]), p. 26.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
66. *On the Road* (New York: Viking, 1957 [1955]), p. 172.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 173.
68. Jack Kerouac, *Visions of Gerard and Tristessa* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1963 [1958]), p. 88.
69. Jack Kerouac, *Scattered Poems* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1972), p. 22.
70. The Sanskrat couplet is:

    dehinoasminyatha dehe kaumaram yauvanam jara
    tatha dehantarapraptirdhirastatra na muhyati.
    (*The Gita* II, 13).
71. *avam devaya, janmane stomo viprebhiraseva akaari ratna dhatam."* (*Rgveda* I, ii, 1). This translation is based on the interpretation given by Swami Dayananda Saraswati in Hindi in his edition of *Rgveda* Volume I (New Delhi: Dayananda Sansthan, Samvat 2050), p. 26.
72. J. Kerouac, *Scattered Poems* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1972), p. 22.
73. *The Dharma Bums* (New York: Viking, 1972, Second Printing [1958]), p. 84.
74. *Visions of Gerard and Tristessa* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1963 [1958]), p. 17.

75. *Reality Sandwiches 1953-60* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1970 [1963] Tenth Printing), p. 98.

76. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

77. *The Fall of America* (New York: City Lights, 1972), p. 75.

78. Gary snyder, *The Back Country* (New York: The New Directions, 1968 [1957]), p. 47.

79. Gary Snyder, "Cold Mountain Poems" *Evergreen Review* II, 6, p. 78.

80. The Sanskrta couplet is like this:

Yogasthah kuru karmani sangamtyaktva dhanamjaya
siddhyasiddhyoh samobhutva samatvam yoga uchyate.
(*The Gita* II, 48).

81. See Chapter II of this book.

82. The Sanskrta *shloka* is like this:

na tvevaham jatu na sam na tvamne mejanadhipah
na cai va na bhavisyamah serve vayam atah param
(*The Gita* II, 12).

83. Gary Snyder, *Riprap and Cold Mountain Poems* (San Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation, 1976), p. 53.

84. *Naked Poetry*, ed. Stephen Berg and Robert Mezey (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co, 1969), p. 336.

85. Gary Snyder, *The Back Country* (New York: The New Directions, 1968 [1957]), p. 53.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

87. Gary Snyder, *Turtle Island* (New York: New Directions, 1974 [1969]), p. 20.

88. *Tantras: Studies on their Religion and Literature* (Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1972 [1963]), p. 90.

89. *Scattered Poems* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1972), p. 42.

90. *The Town and the City* (New York: The Universal Library, 1950), p. 326.

91. *Sad Dust Glories* (Berkeley: Workingman's Press, 1975), pp. 23-27.

92. A *sthitaprajna* has been characterised by Lord Krishna in the following couplet:

"brahmabhutah prasannatma na shochati na kankshati
samah sarveshu bhuteshu madbhaktim labhate param."
(*The Gita* XVIII, 54)

which means "One who has a blissful mental state and keeps his attention confined to Brahman has no grief and no ambition, regards all living beings as equals and attains the heavenly bliss of being His devotee."

93. *Mind Breaths: Poems 1972-1977* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1978), p. 12.

94. Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: Viking, 1957), p. 122.

95. Explaining this fact Sir John Woodroffe observes: "The primary Mantra in the worship of any Deva or Devi is known as the Root Mantra (Mulamantra). Every letter, syllable and Mantra is then a form (Rupa) of the Brahman, and so is the image and all the lines of the yantra and all objects in the universe. And so the Sastra says that they go to Hell who think that the image is merely a stone and that the Mantra is merely a letter of the alphabet. All letters are forms of Sakti as sound-powers. The Sakti, of which they are a manifestation, is the living Energy which projects itself into the form of the universe. The Mantra of a Devata is the Devata. The rhythmical vibrations of its sounds not merely regulate the unsteady vibrations of the sheaths of the worshipper, thus transforming him, but through the power of striving (Sadhana-Sakti) of the worshipper, there arises the form of the Devata which it is" (*The Garland of Letters* [Madras: Ganesh, 1974], p. 261.

96. Gary Snyder, *Turtle Island* (New York: New Directions, 1974 [1969]), p. 17.

97. Sir John Woodroffe, *The Serpent Power* (Madras: Ganesh and Co., 1974), p. 1.

98. *The Dharma Bums* (London: Mayflower, 1965 [1958]), p. 75.

99. *Earth House Hold: Technical Notes and Queries To Fellow Dharma Revolutionaries* (New York: New Directions, 1969 [1957]), p. 4.

100. *Ankor-Wat* (London: Fulcrum Press, 1968), p. 8.

101. *The Fall of America: Poems of these States 1965-1971* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1972), p. 9.

102. The relevant Sanskrta verses are:

Tasyordhve bisatantu sodara-lasat suksma jaganmohini
brahmavaramukham mukhena madhuram sam chadayanti svayam

sankhavarta nibha navina capalamala vilasapada
supta-sarpasama svopari lasat sardha-trivrttakrtih

Kujanti kulakundali ca madhuram mattalimala-sphutam
vacam komalakavya-bandharacana bhedatibheda-kramaih
syasocchvasa-vibhanjanena jagatam jivo yava dharyate
sa mulambuja gahvare vilasati proddama-diptavalih

"Over it shines the sleeping kundalini fine as the fibre of the lotus-stalk. She is the world-bewilderer, gently covering the mouth of Brahma-dvara by Her ow. Like the spiral of the conch-shell, her shining snake-like form goes three and a half times round Siva, and her lustre is as that of a strong flash of young strong lighting. Her sweet murmur is like the indistinct hum of swarms of love-mad bees. She produces melodious poetry and Bandha and other compositions in prose or verse in sequence or otherwise in Sanskrta, Prakrta and other languages. It is she who maintains all the beings of the world by means of inspiration and expiration, and shines in the cavity of the root (Mula) Lotus like a chain of brilliant lights (Sir John Woodroffe, *The Serpent Power* (Madras: Ganesh, 1974, tenth edition), pp. 346-47).

103. Jack Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums* (London: Mayflower, 1965 [1958]), p. 27.

104. *The Tantras: Studies on their Religion and Literature* (Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1972 [1963]), p. 80.

105. *Open Eye, Open Heart* (New York: New Directions, 1973 [1961]), p. 129.

106. In the opening sentence of his book *Satyartha Prakash* Maharshi Dayananda says that Om is God's best name (*Satyartha Prakash* [New Delhi: Dayanand Sansthan, 1976], p. 11).

107. Gary Snyder, *Fudo Trilogy* (Berkeley: Shaman Drum, 1973), pp. 9-10.

108. Gary Snyder, "Poetry and the Primitive: Notes on Poetry as an Ecological Survival Technique", *Poetics of the New American Poetry*, eds. Donald M. Allen and Warren Tallman, (New York: Grove Press, 1973), p. 401.

109. A Ginsberg, *The Fall of America* (New York: City Lights, 1972), p. 41.

110. A. Ginsberg, *Ankor-Wat* (London: Fulcrum Press, 1968), p. 6 (not printed).

111. A Ginsberg, *The Fall of America: Poems of These States 1965-1971* (New York: City Lights, 1972), p. 2.

112. A. Ginsberg, *Empty Mirrors* (New York: Totem Press, 1961), p. 16.

113. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

114. *Ishavasyopanishad, Shantipath.*

115. The Sanskrta couplet is:

na hi dharmartha siddhyartham panamevam prashasyate
panadarthashcha dharmeshcha kamashcha parihiyate
(Valmiki, *Ramayana*, Kishkindha Kanda, XXV, 31, ed. Paremhans Jagdishwarananda Saraswati [Delhi: Govindram Hasananda, 1980], p. 336.)

5

The Literary Techniques of the Beats

Discussing the technique of the Beat poets Donald Wesling observes in his article 'Berkeley: Free Speech and Free Verse': "In their readings and lectures at the conference many poets also showed themselves obsessed by large social themes, moving in mid-career from aesthetics and epistemology toward an idiosyncratic politics as did their masters Pound and William Carlos Williams. The poets of this Whitmanic tradition-surely the most coherent and promising group now writing in the United States—are, like Berkeley students, testing the limits of freedom, looking outside existing social reference, outside existing meters,"[1] Wesling does not like the Beats' allowing themselves as much freedom as they do. But before accepting or rejecting the Beats' ways, or Wesley's opinion, it is essential to examine their own declarations. Jack Kerouac has advanced the theory of spontaneous prose. In his article 'Essentials of Spontaneous Prose' Kerouac argues that spontaneous prose is preferable to any other kind of prose. In this article he explains the theory of free association when he observes: "Not 'selectivity' of expression but following free deviation (association) of mind into limitless blow-on-subject seas of thought swimming in sea of English with no discipline other than rhythms of rhetorical exhalation and expostulated statement.... Blow as deep as you want—

write as deeply, fish as far down as you want, satisfy yourself first, then the reader cannot fail to receive telepathic shock and meaning-excitement by the same laws operating in his own human mind."[2] This theory is based on the view that all human minds behave alike and that if the writer has gone deep, the reader cannot remain unaffected. In other words it is the writer's going deep into the subject he is writing about that he stresses. Kerouac states this fact also when he says in the *Paris Review* interview that he likes feeling in art rather than craftiness or the hiding of feeling.[3] This attitude is romantic, rather than classical. Those who believe that a writer's work should be a true record of what he feels will like the view but those who believe that literature should be a record of only virtuous deeds and thoughts of the virtuous persons, will not favour the idea. However, since literature exists in oder to enable people to know life in its entirety, Kerouac's view cannot be considered to be unacceptable. Kerouac also asserts that Beat writers employ the technique of writing whatever visits their minds and, thus, therein is an unpremeditated art rather than one of careful polishing and chiselling. He explains this view in his article "The Origins of Joy in Poetry" when he says:

> The new American poetry as typified by the SF Renaissance (which means Ginsberg, me, Rexroth, Ferlinghetti, McClure, Corso, Gary Snyder, Philip Lamantia, Philip Whalen, I guess) is a kind of new-old Zen Lunacy poetry, writing whatever comes into your head as it comes, poetry returned to its origin, in the bardic child, truly ORAL as Ferling sa'd, instead of gray faced Academic quibbling. Poetry & [*sic*] prose had for long time fallen into the false hands of the false. These new pure poets confess forth for the sheer joy of confession. They are CHILDRER [*sic*]. They are

> also childlike gray beard Homers singing in the street. They SING, they SWING. It is diametrically opposed to the Eliot shot, who so dismally advises his dreary negative rules like the objective correlative, etc. which is just a lot of constipation and ultimately emasculation of the pure masculine urge to freely sing. Inspite of the dry rules he set down his poetry is itself sublime. I could say lots more but aint got time or sense. But SF is the poetry of a new Holy Lunacy like that of ancient times (Li Po, Hanshan, Tom O Bodlam, Kit Smart, Blake) yet it also has that mental discipline typified by the haiku (Besho, Buson), that is, the discipline of pointing out things directly, purely, concretely, no abstractions or explanations, wham wham the true blue song of man.[4]

Kerouac's theory of spontaneous writing has been taken up for discussion by some critics. Ann Charters regards the theory as Kerouac's main contribution to the development of American fictional technique when she observes: "His main boast as a writer, what he thought would make him legendary, was that he'd originated a new writing style, spontaneous prose that he hoped would revolutionise American literature as much as Joyce had influenced English prose. Spontaneous prose, of course, was unrevisable at least in theory, so it meant Kerouac wouldn't go back to change his manuscripts (although he often did before typing them for publication)."[5] But what she has written within brackets shows that Kerouac does not act according to his theory.

Allen Ginsberg agrees with Kerouac so far as the principle of spontaneity in writing is concerned and Jane Kramer quotes him as having said: "'What happened to me.... was like suddenly being hit with Kerouac's idea that

once you wrote something you couldn't really change it, because that was the manifestation of the mind's moving in time and that attempt to change and revise and restructure and reorient was, in a sense, a lie.'"[6] But Kramer also records the fact that Kerouac edits his compositions when she observes: "All his editing, when any of them are published, consists mainly in correcting his spelling, which is often dreadful, filling in the names of forgotten deities, holy men, and colleagues, and, in general, transferring scribbles onto some semblance of a legible page."[7] If it is accepted that a writer has a right to edit and to fill in the names of deities and holy men, one must also accept that he has a right to replace one word by another and one sentence by another. As a matter of fact, it is actual writing that often enables a writer to discover what he wishes to say and what his viewpoint is.[8] That is why revising one's composition should not be regarded as falsifying one's reactions; on the contrary, it should be regarded as his attempt to find out accurately what he has to say and to overcome language-difficulties.

There are critics who challenge the assertion that Kerouac's prose is spontaneous. Keith N. Hill, for instance, finds that in Kerouac's novels some passages appear to have been written carefully while the rest have the traits of spontaneous and unrevised writing. He says: "Despite the rhapsodic technique Jack Kerouac claimed he used in writing his novels, *The Dharma Bums* at least shows signs of having been more carefully composed than Kerouac and many of his critics would have us believe. I do not mean that it wasn't written quickly; the prose displays the extremes of vigor and awkwardness characteristic of a talented writer churning out many pages a day with a minimum—if not absence—of re-writing. Hasty composition, however, precludes neither the experiences on which a novel is based nor a period of reflection, ordering and decision,

before composition begins."[9] Blanche H. Gelfant also asserts: "Kerouac revised and rewrote *On the Road* countless times before its final publication, though he wanted his readers to believe it a product of spontaneous combustion. He was mistaken in his notion that literature reaches us immediately as does experience. Literature, like painting, music, and sculpture is a meditated art."[10] celfant rejects the very concept of spontaneous literature and says: "If [literature] creates a sense of life, it does so through the medium of language; and however colloquial, disengaged, loose and spontaneous that language seems, one turned to purposes of fiction—however autobiographical—it becomes an aesthetic means, its use controlled for aesthetic ends."[11] However, the idea of spontaneous prose cannot be brushed away so easily, though how far it is practicable is a different question. The spontaneous utterance of a man is likely to be closer to truth and the real feelings of the speaker, than is the premeditated utterance and if it is so, spontaneous writing can give a reader a better view of the writer's temperament and views than can something that has been revised and rerevised. But the main difficulty is that of language which is an acquired thing and often a writer feels that his spontaneous writing is not a faithful representation of his views. The rules of syntax also often become a problem and require a writer to restructure his sentences just as the problem of choosing right words does. Kerouac's theory of spontaneous prose comes close to the principles of Taoism as Taoists value spontaneity very highly and hold that everyone should be allowed to be what he is. Explaining the Taoist view John Blofeld observes in his bok *Beyond the Gods:* "[The Taoists] chiefly valued spontaneity; it was their aim to let everyone be exactly as he is, they allow beings to take care of themselves as effortlessly as forest trees. As for obedience to authority, loyalty, filial piety and the rest, they felt there would be no

need for them among men living in intimate accord with nature. Animals looked tenderly after their young without giving a thought to benevolence."[12]

Ginsberg advances a theory in support of the idea of spontaneity when he observes that "all creation and [*sic*] poesy as transmission of the message of eternity is sacred and must be free of any rational restrictiveness: because consciousness has no limitations."[13] His practice of writing is in conformity with his belief as is evident from Jane Kramer's remarks: "Part II of 'Howl' was inspired by a peyote vision that Ginsberg had in San Francisco, staring out of his window one night at the tower of the Sir Francis Drake Hotel and being reminded of Moloch by the tower's grinning, mask-like facade; the elegy to his mother, 'Kaddiah,' was the product of forty-odd hours awake and high on a combination of amphetemines; and the recent 'Wales Visitation,' which Ginsberg calls his 'first great big Wordsworthian nature poem' was written under LSD."[14] The fact makes it evident that Ginsberg tries not to let his reason interfere with his creative writing. The consequence of this practice is that though there is a lot of obscenity in his works, the reader is able to know Allen Ginsberg's feelings in their true forms. If one is interested in studying what thoughts and feelings visit Ginsberg's mind in the state of intoxication, one may read these works. They also acquaint a reader with what is undesirable and how much harm drugs can do to a man. At least they may convince many readers of the fact that drugs are undesirable things. They also let a reader see how wildly human mind behaves if it is left absolutely unbriddled.

According to Glauco Cambon Ginsberg "pours out his talent in a wild endeavour to revive the Whitmanic posture as a defiance to the Establishment...."[15] He characterises the Beats by "a readiness to risk the prosy and the informal.[16]

It means he finds that Beat poets write in an informal manner and have brought poetry close to prose. He also opines that Beats's poetry is a part of the trend in the recent American poetry which challenges, what Cambon calls "the earlier dominant cult of the 'mask, of Yeatsian restraint and Eliotic indirection," and "the swing of the poetical pendulum in America from elegance to violence, from understatement to loud outspokenness."[17] What he does not pay heed to is the fact that the Beats try to reveal to their readers what has been left unrevealed. When a writer decides to give to his readers only what is desirable, he suppresses all that he or the society, in which he lives, considers undesirable. The work of such a writer does not enable a reader to study all that "eternity" sends into his mind as the experience embodied in his work has lost the part which the writer's reason or his society considers undesirable. In other words, it is an experience which may have lost even its kernel and, thus, may have been falsified altogether.

The fact of the matter is that a poet or a novelist chooses a technique in accordance with his theme, his conception of the form of poetry or novel, and his temperament. That is why it is essential to know what Beats regard poetry and novels to be. Ginsberg stresses that the effects of things are not as significant as the causes of those effects. He observes:

> Poetry... like all arts and sciences is developing into examination-experiment on the very material of which it's made. They say "an examination of language itself' to express this turnabout from photographic objectivity to subjective-abstract composition of words a la Burroughs. .... Now poetry instead of relying for effect on dreaminess of image or sharpness of visual phanopoeia—

> instead of conjuring a vision or telling a truth, stops. Because all vision & [*sic*] all truths are no longer considerable as objective & [*sic*] eternal facts, but as plastic projections of the maker & [*sic*] his language. So nobody can seriously go on passionately concerned with *effects* however seeming-real they be, when he knows inside all his visions & [*sic*] truths are empty, finally. So the next step is the examination of the cause of these effects, the vehicle of the visions, the conceiver of the truth, which is words. Language, the prime material itself.[18]

Ginsberg refuses to obey the rules like that of beginning every line of a poem at the left hand margin. He says:

> There's no reason why every line must begin at the left hand margin. A silly habit, as if all the thoughts in the brain were lined up like a conscript army. No, thought flows freely thru the page space. Begin new ideas at margin and score their development, exfoliation, on the page organically, showing the shape of the thought, one association depending indented on another, with space-jumps to indicate gaps & [*sic*] relationships between Thinks, broken syntax to indicate hesitancies & [*sic*] interruptions, — GRAPHING the movement of the mind on the page, as you would graph a sentence grammatically to show the relation between subject verb & [*sic*] object in primary school—'[19]

He calls his poetry a "[r]evolt of Sudras' poet."[20] Thus he regards poetry as a container of all his thoughts, whether good, bad, vicious or noble and rises against the belief that

one should express one's noble thoughts exclusively and should keep others confined to oneself. If a poet lets his readers read only his noblest thoughts, his utterances are likely to be highly valued by his readers. But if a poet indiscriminately brings his thoughts to the sheet of paper before him, his utterances will be of great use for a psychologist and a biographer but a critics will have to separate the noble utterances from the ignoble ones before recommending his works to the readers. That is why a poet who regards poetry as the expression of his mental reactions and does it truthfully will accept Ginsberg's view, while another who wishes literature to be a record of noble thoughts will himself separate his noble utterances from the ignoble ones and will leave only the noble ones to be taken care of by the succeeding generations.

The Beat writers violate the rules of punctuation and syntax in a number of their compositions. For instance, in his poem 'Long Dead's Longevity' Kerouac uses no other mark of punctuation than a dash and an apostrophe. Here is the poem:

Long dead's longevity
Coyote Viejo
Ugly un handsome old
    puff chin eye crack
Bone fat face McGee
In older rains sat by
    new fires
Plotting unwanted pre
    doomed presupposing
Odes—long dead
Riverbottom bum
Raunchy

Scrounge
Brakeman bum
Wine cans sand sexless
    Silence die tomb
Pyramid cave snake Satan[21]

In the last line of the poem four nouns have been put together without any verb or article or preposition or conjunction to connect them. Ginsberg too violates the rules of grammar and punctuation in a number of his poems. For instance, in the poems 'Europe! Europe!'. 'O Lindsay,' 'Message,' 'To Aunt Rose,' and 'At Apollinaire's Grave' he uses neither a comma, nor a full-stop, nor a colon, nor a semi-colon.. Likewise, in his poem 'My Alba,' included in his volume *Reality Sandwiches*, punctuation-marks have not been employed and there are run-on lines. But a poet can make himself understood only when he uses language carefully and uses his words in such a way that they become an appropriate vehicle of his thought. John Erskine expresses such an idea when he says: "In order to be a poet at all, therefore, he must have the mastery, not only of words but of what is even more important, those narrative elements which are most current in the consciousness of his fellows, and he must cultivate the tact with which to turn those elements to a new meaning."[22] Even if Erskine's suggestion to the poet to learn the tact to turn elements to new meanings is not accepted, it cannot be denied that a poet should make proper use of words. If a poet composes a poem in order to communicate his emotion or experience, he will explain it in a communicable manner and will try to explain his ideas as much as he can. He also invents characters and incidents to embody his view. The form of the language he employes for this purpose is the one in which he can best express his views. But since he has nothing but language

to serve as a vehicle of communication, he is required to observe the rules which his readers do, otherwise what he wants to say may not be correctly understood by his readers. But the Beats do not care for these rules, especially in their poems and make them the containers of their thoughts without caring to make them communicable. Rhythm and metre too are employed by poets not without purpose and J. Middleton Murry rightly stresses this fact when he says: "Rhythm and metre, which are the formal distinguishing marks of poetry, have the power of throwing the reader into a heightened susceptibility to emotional suggestion. Why they have this power would be a long, and perhaps mainly a physiological story. But the plain psychological fact is that the recurrence of a regular rhythmical beat has an almost hypnotic effect: it completely detaches our attention from the world of everyday, lulls the practical alertness which that world demands, and if it is regular and monotonous enough, actually sends us to sleep."[23] Even though it requires efforts to adhere to the rules of metre, the Beat poets, like many other twentieth century poets, have done a definite harm to their poetry by not availing themselves of its advantages.

Allen Ginsberg believes poetry to be an expression of feelings. Explaining his view he says: "The poetry generally is like a rhythmic articulation of feeling. .... It's a feeling that begins somewhere in the stomach and rises up forward in the breast and then comes out through the mouth and ears, and comes forth a croon or a groan or a sigh. .... Or actually what happens is... there's a definite body rhythm that has no definite words, or may have one or two words attached to it, one or two key words attached to it. And then, in writing it down, it's simply by a process of association that I find what the rest of the statement is—what can be collected around the word. ... Because I'm hitting some area which is absolutely true. ... In that sense

prophecy, because it touches a common key...."[24] The poet's explanation makes it evident that first he finds out a word for his feeling and then the process of association expands it into a statement. In other words here he has explained how meaning takes shape in his mind. A poet may like to polish his statement or let it undergo the process of selection and rejection. But Ginsberg does not like it and wishes a poet to talk to his reader as frankly as he does to the Muse and says: "...there should be no distinction between what we write down, and what we really know, to begin with."[25] He favours the idea of a poet's letting the reader know whatever visits his mind. He explains it in his article 'When the Mode of Music Changes the Walls of the City Shake' when he says: "Thus the mind must be trained, i.e. let loose, freed—to deal with itself as it actually is, and not to impose on itself, or its poetic artifacts, an arbitrarily preconceived pattern (formal or Subject)—and *all* patterns, unless discovered in the moment of composition.... The only pattern of value or interest in poetry is the solitary individual pattern peculiar to the poet's moment & [*sic*] the poem *discovered* in the mind & [*sic*] the process of writing it out on the page, as notes, transcriptions—reproduced in the fittest accurate form, at the time of composition."[26] The thing which he values more than any other thing is the truth and he says so in his poem 'After All, What Else is There to Say' in which he explains how he composes poems:

When I sit before a paper
    Writing my mind turns
In a kind of feminine
    madness of chatter;
but to think to see, outside,
in a tenement the wells
    of the universe itself

I wait: wait till the sky
    appears as it is,
wait for a moment when
    the poem itself
is my way of speaking out, not
declaiming or celebrating, yet
    but telling the truth.[27]

Following this method of writing signifies that it is writing that makes the poet discover what he means to express in his compositions, that the poet does not know as to what he is going to express in his poem and that he is not at all conscious of his making any efforts to find objective correlatives for his emotions or thoughts. His claim in the last two lines of this passage that he neither declaims nor celebrates but only tells the truth signifies the fact that he simply reproduces all that visits his mind. Such compositions will enable a psychologist to know Ginsberg correctly, and to find out how human mind behaves.

Ginsberg's prosody is personal as he does not adhere to the rules of metres and claims that the length of a line varies with the length of his breath. He says: "Not being a musician from childhood my own Japa and Kirtan is home-made but not without influence on verbal composition practice. Introduction of tape recorder also catalyses changes in possibilities of composition via improvisation. 'Wichita Vortex Sutra," a short fragment of larger trans-american [sic] voyage poetries [sic], is therefore, composed directly on tape by voice, and then transcribed to page; page arrangement notates the thought-stops, breath-stops, runs of inspiration, changes of mind, startings and stopping of the car.'"[28] It would have been better if, instead of counting syllables or chest-pulses, he had counted lung-pulses as the length of breath depends on the length of a lung-pulse.

He claims that in *Howl* each line is a single breath-unit, when he remarks: "Ideally each line of *Howl* is a single breath unit.... My breath is long—that's the measure, one physical—mental inspiration of thought contained in the elastic of a breath..... It probably bugs Williams now, but it's a natural consequence, my own heightened conversation, not cooler average daily talk short breath. I got to mouth more madly this way.[29] But the claim is unconvincing on the grounds that all the lines of the poem are not of equal length and that the boundary of a line corresponds with that of a tone-group, or a clause or a sentence. In other words, syntax, rather than breath-length, is the factor that determines the length of a line in this poem. For example, in the first section of the poem most of lines begin with the relative pronoun 'who.' This means that each of them is a one clause line and these clauses are the relative ones. Explaining the use of 'who' Thomas F. Merrill observes: "'Who, it can be said, also served as an organisational excuse; by its sanction, otherwise unrelated chunks of inspiration could be thrown spontaneously into the poem. In other words, the device was a structural shield which kept 'thinking' at bay, thereby allowing imaginative illumination and association unlimited freedom."[30] The following first five lines of *Howl* will evidence this fact:

> I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed
> by madness, starving hysterical naked,
>
> dragging themselves through the negro streets at
> dawn looking for an angry fix,
>
> angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient
>
> heavenly connection to the starry dynamo in the
> machinery of night,
>
> who poverty and tatters and hollow-eyed and
> high sat up smoking in the supernatural darkness

> of cold-water flats floating across the tops of cities contemplating jazz,
>
> who bared their brains to Heaven under the El and saw Mohammedan angels staggering on tenement roofs illuminated, ...[31]

The first, fourth and fifth of these lines are formed by clauses, the first being a principal clause and the fourth and the fifth being relative clauses as both of them qualify 'hipsters' in the third line; the second line is formed by a participle phrase which is the reduced form of a relative clause; and the third line again consists of a participle phrase. Thus it is evident that it is the syntactic consideration that causes the breaking of the discourse into lines. However, the idea of having long lines is a desirable one as it causes the avoidance of the wastage of space on the page. If it is possible to have five, six or seven words in a line, it cannot be considered wrong to have even twenty-five words in it. That it is syntactic consideration rather than the length of breath which lies at the root of Ginsberg's breaking his utterances into lines is evident from his poem 'Ayers Rock Uluru Song' in which the line-boundary corresponds with the sentence-boundary. Here are its last five lines which illustrate this fact:

> The red Kangaroo people forgot their own song.
> Only a man with four sticks can cross the Simpson Desert
> One rain turns red dust green with leaves.
> One raindrop begins the universe
> When the raindrop dries, worlds come to their end.[32]

The claim that each line is as long as the poet's breath lets it be can be accepted only if he is able to prove that his

sentence too is as long as his breath.

There is little difference between the language Ginsberg uses in his prose and the language he uses in poetry. Here are, for example, a few lines from his poem *Howl:*

> Moloch whose eyes are a thousand blind windows
> Moloch whose skyscrapers stand in the long sheets like endless Jehovahs!
>
> Moloch whose factories dream and croak in the fog!
>
> Moloch whose smokestacks and antennal crown the cities![33]

Here are, then, a few sentences from his prose: "When will we discover an America that will not deny its own God? Who takes up arms, money, police, and a million hands to murder the consciousness of God? Who spits in the beautiful face of Poetry which sings the Glory of God and weeps in the dust of the world?"[34] If the rhetorical questions asked in the prose sentences are made to go with the lines from "Howl,' they will become indistinguishable. Ginsberg even says explicitly: "'Of course the distinctions between prose and poetry are broken down any way.'"[35] And this statement comes close to Wordsworth's view that there is essentially no difference between the language of prose and that of metrical compostions.[36]

At places Ginsberg and Kerouac start playing with words and letters. In the poem 'Song: PIE MY FUN' by Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac the substitution of letters is the only remarkable thing. It can be seen in the following lines:

> Pope my parts,
> Pop my pot,

Poke my pap,
Pit my plum.

A champion of New Criticism is likely to declare it to be a very beautiful poem for the patterns of phonemes in it as here every line begins with a /p/, the second word in every line is 'my' and the last word too in every line begins with a /p/. Alliteration has also been used in the poem 'Pull My Daisy' by Allen Ginsberg, Kerouac and Neal Cassady:

Bone my shadow
dove my dream
start my halo bleeding
Milk my mind & [*sic*]
Make me cream[38]

Such artistry has also been employed in the following lines where it is the interchange of phonemes that makes the poem attractive:

Rob my locker
Lick my rooks
Rack my lacks
Lark my looks[39]

Levity is the distinguishing feature of such poems.

Kerouac arranges his words in his poems in such a manner that their arrangement communicates the meaning through the reader's sense of sight. For example, when he writes:

I
clearly
saw
the skeleton underneath[40]

he makes the reader see the skeleton underneath by placing the word 'underneath' in the fourth line as if the skeleton were actually lying there. Likewise, when he comes to say, in the same poem on the same page, that worms have changed the facial features, he also draws the sketches of the worms. Such use of signs and words must have been made in the days when man had just learnt writing and the poet seems to be taking language back to its infancy. John Erskine's remark about such a behaviour of the modern poets is worth-reading in this context: "[The modern poets] instead of revitalising their art, are simply retracing the history of poetic language back to its aboriginal meagerness. Language began.... in brief personal utterances understood only by the speaker; it developed as the frequent repetition of these sounds taught the speaker himself and his hearers to attach meanings to them. It developed still further as the meanings of words expanded into episodes of common experience—the larger language of poetry.[41] A right approach will be making proper use of the modern richness of the language one is using.

In *The Gates of Wrath* Ginsberg tries to write rhymed verse but he cannot manage it successfully and has, to adapt his own words, to dwell "in Hell on earth to write this rhyme."[42] This assertion is being made on the basis of the facts that in 'Two Sonnets' he makes 'flame' rhyme with 'am', 'world' with 'wild', and 'be' with 'flame'.[43] Likewise, in the poem 'Do We Understand Eachother?' he makes 'love' rhyme with 'move', and wondrously' with 'gentility.'[44] He has made various experiments with rhyme-scheme: in 'Two Sonnets' it is a b a b c d c d c d e f d c; in 'The Voice of Rock' it is a b a b a a a b; in 'Do We Understand Eachother?' it is a b c a b c d e f c d; in 'Vision 1948'; it is a b a c b b c; in 'On Reading William Blake's 'The Sick Rose' it is a b a b a a; in 'Refrain' it is a b a a b; in 'A Western Ballad' it is a b b a a and in 'Love Letter' it

is a a b b a a b. In the poem 'Sweet Levinsky' he breaks the word 'cheerfully' into 'cheerful' and 'ly' to make it rhyme with other words ending with 'ful' in the following passage:

> Sweet Levinsky, why no tearful,
> Sweet Levinsky, don't be fearful,
> Sweet Levinsky, here's your earful
> of the angels chirping cheerful—
> ly Levinsky, sweet Levinsky.
> Sweet Levinsky, sweet Levinsky.[45]

The poet seems to be ridiculing the practice of employing rhyme in poems. No doubt, the use of rhyme is unnatural and one may have to include a number of unwanted words in order to make a line rhyme with another.

The Beat writers often employ obscene language in their poems and novels. For instance, Ginsberg does it in his poem *Howl* for which it had to face an obscenity trial too. American Romantics vindicate the use of such a language. For instance, R.W. Emerson does it in his essay "The Poet" when he asserts: "The vocabulary of an omniscient man would embrace words and images excluded from polite conversation. What would be base, or even obscene, to the obscene, becomes illustrious, spoken in a new connection of thought. The piety of the Hebrew prophets purges their grossness. ... Small and mean things serve as well as great symbols. The meaner the type by which a law is expressed, the more pungent it is, and the more lasting in the memories of men; just as we choose the smallest box or case in which any needful utensil can be carried."[46] However, what a writer says through obscene words can be said better through the words the community regards as its best ones. A writer's task is not only to reproduce what people do in actual life but also to show them what they should do. And language is the field in which he is

required to refine people's taste. If after reading a book a reader remains unimproved, his reading has been fruitless. That is why a writer should consciously make an effort to free himself from vulgarisms and to acquire the capacity to make use of refined language in such a way that he is able to communicate his views and feelings to the maximum number of readers, if not to all, though doing it to all is the theoretical ideal.

The use of obscene language by the Beats can be defended on the ground that the loafers and tramps whose ways have been depicted in their works actually use obscene words in their lives and that if a writer tries to show how tramps behave linguistically, the use of such a language cannot be avoided. However, even though the argument is not unsound, what can be asserted here is that such facts should be suggested and reported rather than shown.

The Beats' views and practices support Henry James' assertion: "Art lives upon discussion, upon experiment, upon curiosity, upon variety of attempt, upon the exchange of views and the comparison of standpoints; and there is a presumption that those times when no one has anything particular to say about it, and has no reason to give for practice or preference, though they may be times of honour, are not times of development—are times possibly, even a little of dullness."[47] No doubt, experiments enrich art and bring into existence new art-forms. If literary artists had not been allowed to make experiments, new genres like short story, novel, radio-drama, and mini-poem would not have come into existence. But it is also essential to make use of the experiences of our predecessors. It will be a fatal mistake, for example, to eat poison in order to find out what it does to a man. It will certainly be better not to decide to taste it. Likewise, the experience of human race so far has been that the use of only refined language

endears a writer to his readers and new writers should avail themselves of such an experience of their predecessors.

Attempts have been made to study the structures of the Beats' compositions. For instance, while discussing the structure of Kerouac's *On the Road* George Dardess observes in his article "The Delicate Dynamics of Friendship: A Reconsideration of Kerouac's *On the Road:* "One of Kerouac's accomplishments in *On the Road* is in fact to unify the open ending... with a time-honoured novelistic and dramatic structure. The structure is evident in a narration divided into five parts, the third of which contains what can be called the climax of Sal's gradual development of excited interests in Dean, while Part Four records Sal's development of an apocalyptic fear of him."[48] But if one tries to find out the structure of *On the Road* on the basis of the journeys of the characters one will find that the novel is structured like a Z, the lines of the letter stand for the roads of the region described in the novel. The shape of the letter Z, just like the novel, suggests that any onward movement will result in a fall into a bottomless vacuum.

As a mater of fact, *On the Road* is a collection of a large number of incidents most of which resemble the misadventures narrated in picaresque novels. The misadventures Sal and Dean encounter are connected together with the links which these two characters provide. The incidents are not significant in themselves but they reveal the temperaments of the characters and enable the reader to study how undesirable and irresponsible the ways of these nomadic people are. Dean's insistence on going forward and refusal to learn from the past resembles a traveller's insisting on going on even when he has reached the end of the lower line of Z.

Kerouac's *Visions of Cody* is an elegy in prose. In this novel we have long narratives, and long conversations

which make its parts look like dramas inserted in a novel. The elegy brings the reader onto the firm ground of the belief that Cody is not dead and has become one with average men: "'No, Cody isn't dead; Cody is the average man, Cody is the fellow who works for a living and has a wife and kids, and worries about taxes in March, and listens intently to the catastrophic news of radios, also to every kind of wild jabberous crapula that comes from the minds of harrassed radio script-writers who can't cash their checks while they're writing Inner District Attorney."[49] Just as Shelley's Adonais is his elegy on the death of Keats becomes one with nature, Kerouac's Cody has become one with average men.

The way Ginsberg's *Howl* is structured brings it close to T.S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land*. If in the *The Waste Land* there are five sections, in *Howl* there are four, each of which has a separate picture to show: in the first section Moloch is driving Carl Soloman to madness and is making him a victim of atrocities; in the second section the focus of the camera is turned to Moloch alone; in the third section it is turned to Carl Soloman alone; and in the fourth section comes the chorus to convey the poet's metaphysics according to which everything is holy. It is in the fourth section that the poet suggests a cure to what is shown happening in the first three sections. Just as in a pindaric ode there are the movements known as the strophe, the antistrophe and the epode, in this poem there is a regularity behind the pictures of the fight between the oppressor and the oppressed in the first section, of the oppressor in the second section, of the oppressed in the third section, and of the solution of the problem in the fourth. In the second section short sentences have been used and they convey the effect that the oppressed man has been overpowered by the mood of intense passion of anger which is making him sigh and use abusive language as here the oppressor

is described in the form in which the oppressed finds him to be. The use of exclamatory sentences, as every sentence in this section is exclamatory, also suggests the same thing. In the third section there is no punctuation mark, not even a full stop at the end. The utterances here resemble a number of long sighs put together.

If one tries to give the structure of *Howl* a graphic form, it is found to be a series of three crosses terminating in a circle. The crosses give a visual form to the conflict that has been shown in the three sections of the poem and the circle suggests the reconciliation between them through the declaration that everything is holy. If this figure is made to stand on its cross as its legs the circle will look like a human head and the crosses will look like two ropes entwined together; and the whole figure will look like the picture showing how the serpent power or *kundalini* can be taken upto the *sahasrara*.

Robert Kern finds Snyder's poetry to have "openess to empirical reality" and in his article 'Recipes, Catalogues, Open Form Poetics: Gary Snyder's Archetypal Voice' says: "Thus contemporary poets like Simpson, Kinnell, and Synder, with their openness to empirical reality and their positive readiness to regard the world as the primary locus of value, seem equally ready to accept the referentiality of language and mimetic procedures in writing, and therefore to reject any literary conception of form as self-existent in favour of Levertov's intuition of an immanent 'form beyond forms.'"[50]

He further argues: "For if the goal is the apprehension of the 'form beyond forms,' then the poet must literally risk formlessness.... in order to reach it. .... Thus every poem is literally unique—or ought to be — and this is the basic assumption in Synder's approach to open form, where

the uniqueness of the poem reflects the uniqueness of the experience underlying it, and where the denial of history implicit in such an assumption demands that every poem be an absolute beginning, the first."[51] It is surprising that the critic does not like every poem to have its own form. Since every poem has a new thing to convey to the reader, it is bound to have a new form. That is why the novelty of form is preferable to the repetition of an old one. What needs scrutiny is whether what the poet wishes to say has been said properly and whether what has been said is worth-reading or not. If the ancients were free to choose any form they liked and to follow the rules of their own making so far as the length of the line, rhythm and rhyme-scheme were concerned, the moderns too have an equal right to avail themselves of that freedom. The significant things are that what the author wants to say is worth-listening to and it is said in such a manner that the reader can grasp it in its entirety.

Both Ginsberg and Snyder are the poets of man and nature, but they adopt diametrically opposite ways in their approaches. Ginsberg turns from man to nature, while Snyder turns from nature to man. The following passage from Ginsberg's *Sad Dust Glories* will serve as an example of his approach as in it first he describes himself and then turns to trees and the sky:

When I sit
I see dust motes in any eye
Ponderosa needles trembling
green shine
in blue sky.
Wind sound passes thru
pine tops, distant
waves of windiness flutter black

oak leaves
and leave them still
like my mind
which forgets
why the bluejay across the woods'
clearing
squawks mid afternoon.[52]

Here, first, the poet describes his own conditions; then he turns to nature and describes the blue sky, pine-tops, oak-leaves and the sound of the wind; and then finds similarity between nature and himself. Snyder's way is illustrated in the following lines of 'Bedrock' in which first he talks of a pond and then comes to himself:

Snowmelt pond warm granite
we make camp,
no thought of finding more.[53]

This signifies that Synder's main concern is nature, while Ginsberg's is man.

Snyder's poems 'Seed Pods,' 'Send,' 'Song of the Tangle,' 'Song of the Slip,' and 'Song of the View' included in his collection *Regarding Wave* and the poem 'Charms' included in *Turtle Island* are marked by sensuality as they make it evident that the poet loves to write about human body as much as about nature. The following lines of Snyder also make it evident that the poet loves the human body as much as he loves nature: "Man is a beautiful animal. We know this because other animals admire us and love us. Almost all animals are beautiful and paleolithic hunters were deeply moved by it. To hunt means to use your body and senses to the fullest: to strain your consciousness to feel what the deer are thinking today, this moment; .....:[54]

And they also make it obvious that too much love for the body becomes a temptation to indulge in sensual remarks and also sensual activities.

The Beats often use non-standard language. For example, Ginsberg does it when he writes in his poem 'America': "Him make Indians learn read. Him need big black niggers. Hah, Her make us all work sixteen hours a day."[55] And uses 'him' and 'her' as subjects of verbs. Jack Kerouac coins new words, uses old words in new ways, uses Sanskrta words with English derivational suffixes, and makes compound words in new ways. For example, he uses the Sanskrta word *karma* as a verb by transforming it to 'Karmacised'[56]; some of his compound words are 'cut-off-ness,' 'blownoutness,' 'putoutness,' 'turned-off-ness,' 'nothing-happens-ness,' 'gone-ness' and 'gone-out-ness'[57]; he uses expressions like 'dust of my thoughts,' and 'ageless solitude[58]; and at one place he changes 'told' into 'teold', 'thought' into 'thyought' and tell into 'tyell'[59] and makes the reader conscious of a character's peculiarities of speech. He uses the stative verb 'know' as an action verb in the sentence: "He tried all in his power to tell me what he was knowing and they envied that about me, ...'"[60] He uses the expression 'blackgloved hands'[61] for 'hands covered with black gloves.' He coins the word 'littler'[62] as a comparative form of 'little.' He is fond of using long sentences with a large number of clauses embedded in them. Here is, for example, an almost one page long sentence:

> To Cody it was a vision, the moment of his arrival that everybody was waiting for, yet even though he stood in the door at the side of great cool Tom Watson the Virgil of this big Inferno, wearing not only his clothes but the same gorgeously sophisticated robe of their afternoon's adventure which was already undergoing a rich

> change to evening and the lazy explorations that were to come, a decadent refinement that all the dumb bastards in this dimness would have to struggle to understand to know anything hereafter even about pool, nobody made a move to notice or even gave much of a crap and Cody would have immediately felt drowned again except suddenly for the saving memory of a hunch he used to have in boyhood which was whenever he turned his back on the people who were involved with him and even others who happened to be standing nearby, perfect strangers sometimes, they immediately gathered with the speed of light at the nape of his neck to discuss him voicelessly, dancing, pointing, until, jerking his head around for a quick look or just slowly to check, it turned out they'd always twanged back in place with all-to-be-expected fiendish perfect hypocrisy and in exactly the same bland position as before.[63]

The whole vision has been described just in one sentence. This signifies the fact that the vision is one whole and that the whole of it has been had in one glance.

Hubert Selby, Jr. uses obliques for apostrophes when in his 'Double Feature" he writes:

> That/s enough, You don/t plan it, you just enjoy it; relax and float along with it and laugh. Yeah, that/s the secret, and as long as you control it you/ve got it made, but try to drag it by the arm and you/ll kill it....[62]

Such experimenting and exploring new possibilities are a privilege of a creative writer. Since a literary writer is a creator, he has to seek fresh themes and new ways.

It is, as a matter of fact, this thing that separates a creative artist from a common man: a common man takes things for granted and adjusts himself to the circumstances in which he finds himself placed, but a creative artist is dissatisfied with what he finds around him and suggests what should replace what exists. The critic also has to change his approach according to the changes in the approaches of the creative writers; at least he has to readjust his critical principles. No doubt, it will be wrong to reconcile the ideals of truth, beauty, and goodness, yet be cannot expect romantics and classicists to write alike. He is not wrong if he rejects the use of the word "shined" as the past tense form of 'shine,' when he finds it in Jack Kerouac's novel,[65] provided the user of the word is believed to know English well, but the use of an oblique for an apostrophe is not to be rejected outright as the practice suggests a new possibility without causing any hindrance in decoding the meaning of the passage.

Ginsberg does not like to adhere to the conventional prosodic rules. He believes that the conventional form is too symmetrical and does not suit the requirements of a poet embodying his mystical illuminations in it. He explains his view in his article "When the Mode of Music Changes the Walls of the City Shake" when he says:

> Trouble with conventional form (fixed line count and stanza form) is, it's too symmetrical, geometrical, numbered and pre-fixed—unlike to my own mind which has no beginning and end, nor fixed measure of thought (or speech—or writing) other than its own cornerless mystery—to transcribe the latter in a form most nearly representing its actual "occurrence" in my "method"—which requires the skill of freedom of composition—and which will lead

> poetry to the expression of the highest moments of the mind-body—mystical illumination—and its deepest emotion (through tears—love's all)—in the forms nearest to what it actually looks like (date of mystical imagery) and feels like (rhythm of actual speech and rhythm prompted by direct transcription of visual and other mental data)—plus not to forget the sudden genius-like Imagination or fabulation of unreal and out of this world verbal constructions which express the true gaiety and excess of Freedom—(and also by their nature express the First Cause of the World) by means of spontaneous irrational juxtaposition of sublimely related fact,...[66]

If Ginsberg's statement is examined in the light of the practices of the Indian mystic poets like Kabir, it is found to have a sense in it, because Kabir makes use of symbolic expressions with paradoxes in them in order to communicate his mystic messages to his listeners.

Ginsberg is conscious of what he and his associates are doing in literature. He claims: "That we have begun a revolution of literature in America, again, without meaning to, merely by the actual practice of poetry—this would be inevitable. No doubt we knew what we were doing."[67] But he does not always violate the conventional rules; when he chooses he writes rhyming lines too, though in such lines he makes 'climb' rhyme with 'same' in the opening poem of his volume *The Gates of Wrath.* So does he do when he joins 'world' with 'wild' in the second sonnet of the volume, 'blossom' with 'doom' in the poem 'On Reading William Blake's 'The Sick Rose' and 'love' with 'approve' in the poem 'A Very Dove.' Ginsberg also employs alliteration in the line: "stone girders snailed and starfish stinking, sea sperm rotten in Kelp masses....[68] as he uses

the sound/s/ in six words. So does he do in the line: "Bam! Brahms brasses bang bright bombs...."[69] where the initial letter of every word is 'b.'

Jack Kerouac is primarily interested in the study of human beings as he describes the forms and the ways of a large number of human characters in his novels. Here is one of such descriptions: "..... I see her standing, with her black velvet slacks, hands a pockets [*sic*], thin, slouched, cig hanging from her lips, the smoke itself curling up, her little black back hairs of short haircut combed down fine and sleek, her lipstick, pale brown skin, dark eyes, the way shadows play on her high cheekbones, the nose, the little soft shape of chin to neck, the little Adam's apple, so hip, so cool, so beautiful, so modern, so new, so unattainable to sad bagpants me in my shack in the middle of the woods—..."[70] The novelist describes different parts of Mardou's body and then gives the general impression. His practice resembles that of Edmund Spenser who first describes a person in detail in the first eight lines of his stanza and then completes the picture by giving the overall impression in the ninth line. It is the use of adjectives that marks Kerouac's descriptions. In the description given above be uses a large number of adjectives like 'black velvet,' 'thin,' slouched,' 'little black back,' 'short,' 'fine and sleek,' 'pale brown,' 'dark,' 'high', 'little soft,' 'little,' 'cool,' 'beautiful,' 'modern,' 'new,' and 'unattainable' and they evidence the fact that the style he employs here is adjectival. Such a style enables him to describe persons, things and landscapes in a sensuously perceptible manner.

Kerouac uses onomatopoeic words too: he uses 'wham' in the following sentence to describe the movement of the trucks: "'Here the big trucks roared, wham, and inside two minutes one of them oranked to a stop for me.'"[71] So are the words 'raspy' and 'slammed' in the following part

of a sentence: "....a hoarse raspy voice who just slammed...."[72] And so is 'hyaw' in the sentence: "And he threw himself on a stool and went hyaw hyaw hyaw."[73] Such words indicate a writer's over-zealousness to reproduce the facts of life in an undistorted manner, though at places they may also suggest that the writer's vocabulary is not sufficiently rich.

The use of long compound words is another distinguishing feature of Kerouac's style. Some of such words used by him are "brought-at-Brooks-Brothers-deliberately",[74] "thirty-year-old-married-with-two-children-might-have-been-brakeman"[75] and "fabled-cable-so-photographable"[76] At places there is internal rhyme in his sentences. For example, in the following sentence he uses three words: 'glug', 'slug' and 'jug' which rhyme with one another: "...I wandered from group to group, facing them and facing away from the stage, urging them to glug a slug from the jug, or wandered back and sat on the right side of the stage going out little wows and yesses of approval...."[77] He also uses a few words in unconventional senses. For instance, he uses the verb 'go' in the sense of 'separate' in the following sentence: "It seemed as though he had been gone a long time, almost longer than he could remember, from these things, from this place, from these people who were his people."[78] That is why he has used this intransitive verb in its passive voice form.

Gary Snyder employs a straightforward method to convey his meaning and does not take the help of the device of suggestiveness, with the result that his poems look like prose-pieces. Here is a passage that makes it evident:

> The man who has the soul of the wolf
> knows the self-restraint
> of the wolf

aimless executions and slaughterings
are not the work of wolves and eagles
but the work of hysterical sheep[79]

Here we have two prose sentences broken into six lines of verse, the only remarkable things being that there is no full stop to mark the end of a sentence and the second sentence does not begin with a capital letter. The word-order here is not different from that of a prose sentence as the subject is followed by the verb and that by the object. What makes the passage poetic is the fact that the poet attributes slaughtering to sheep rather than to wolves as such a thing signifies that the words 'sheep' and 'wolves' are being used here in their symbolic senses, though since sheep are known well to be gentle and non-violent and wolves to be flesh-eating animals, it is quite easy to know what they symbolise. The poet becomes even more straightforward in the following lines:

The release of Demonic Energies in the name of
the People
must cease[80]

Here he is writing slogans rather than poetry. The poet is writing in favour of virtue as he is trying to stop the release of evil forces, but the expression brings the lines close to slogans shouted by people moving in a procession.

Many of Snyder's poems look like diary-entries in which personal experiences have been recorded. For instance, in his poem 'Above Pate Valley' he seems to be recording what a worker might have experienced when he writes:

We finished clearing the last
Section of trail by noon,
High on the ridge-side

Two thousand feet above the creek
Reached the pass, went on
Beyond the white pine groves,....[81]

The poem ends with

I followed my own
Trail here. Picked up the cold-drill,
Pick, singlejack, and sack
Of dynamite.
Ten thousand years.[82]

It is the last line that prevents the reader from believing that the poet is simply recording an experience and gives an added meaning to all that is recorded in the earlier lines. This line suggests that it is not the experience of one single day but one of a long period of time. Here an attempt has been made to typicalise a particular experience.

Gary Snyder makes his expressions poetic by attributing the characteristics of the human to the non-human, of the animate to the inanimate and of the concrete to the abstract., For instance, in his poem 'Water' he attributes the trait of concrete things to the sunshine when he says:

Pressure of sun on the rockslide
Whirled me in a dizzy hop-and-step descent....[83]

Here the poet describes the sun exercising pressure on the rockslide, though the effect of the sun on the man is natural as the bright sun is likely to make a man leave a place and move away in search of a shade. Though in the lines quoted from *Riprap* and *The Fudo Trilogy* Snyder does not make use of rhyme, yet his poem 'The Wild Mushroom' makes it evident that when the poet chooses, he can write rhymed lines also and look like a 19th century conventional poet, as in this poem the second line rhymes with the

fourth in each stanza even though sometimes some rhymes are weak: in the fifth stanza 'humped' has been made to rhyme with 'stump', for instance.

Alliteration is Snyder's favourite figure of speech and he repeatedly employes it in his poems. For instance, in the lines:

> The split—cedar
> smoked salmon
> cloudy days of Oregon,
> the thick fir forests.[84]

he repeats the phoneme /s/ four times in the first two lines and the phoneme /f/ twice in the last line. At places he makes one part of speech serve the function of another. For instance, in the poem 'Anasazi' he changes the noun 'birth' into a verb when he writes:

> Women
> birthing
> at the foot of ladders in the dark.[85]

While talking about Snyder's use of language Alan Williamson asserts in his essay 'Gary Snyder: An Appreciation': "Brisk and elliptical, preferring nouns and participles to adjectives and connectives, they are poems that almost perfectly fulfil the ideal of economy Pound formulated for the Imagists. Their objectivity is in some ways deceptive, however; like the Zen Koan, they deal in paradoxes, and invoke states of unusual calmness, inwardness and clarity."[86] Economy is, no doubt, there in Snyder's poems, but Williamson's view that it is there on account of the fact that participles, rather than adjectives, have been used there, is unacceptable because participles function like adjectives too when they qualify nouns and pronouns. Moreover, Snyder deletes auxiliary verbs and

relative pronouns as a result of which one finds it difficult to understand the meanings of his utterances. Let us look at these lines:

> Whole towns shut down
> hitching the Coast road, only gypos
> Running their beat trucks, no logs on
> Gave me ride.[87]

In these lines from his poem 'The Late Snow and Lumber Strike of the Summer of Fifty-four' there is no auxiliary verb before 'shut' in the first line; there is neither the subject nor the helping verb in the second line.

Richard Howard finds Snyder's poems lacking in transcendence. He says: "...the principal charm of *his* poems—transitory, elliptical, extraterritorial—will be, again and again, in the most unexpected contexts, that precipitate of experience without interpretation, the *salts* of an evaporated life, not raw...but rapt, 'an offer'...

"There will be nothing transcendent about such realia, vivid but never evoked, present because (merely) perceived: there are no symbols in Snyder's poetry, no metaphors even, nothing ever stands for anything else...."[88] But symbols and metaphors are only the tools of a poet; he uses them to make his views communicable. It is not essential for a poet to use them. If a poet can make his views and emotions communicable even without using any metaphor or symbol it is all the more welcome as such a thing is a testimony of his strength rather than weakness. Moreover, Snyder does make use of symbols. Here is a passage to evidence the statement:

> aimless executions and slaughterings
> are not the work of wolves and eagles
> but the work of hysterical sheep...[89]

Here wolves and eagles symbolise the rulers, while the hysterical sheep symbolise common masses in a state of rebellion.

Robert Kern attacks Gary Snyder's literary technique in the words: "Given his preference for a notion of experience as presence, as opposed to any sort of meditation, and in sofaras [*sic*] literature itself is a symbolic form, Snyder's early poems are inescapably anti-literary—metonymic and elliptical in style, impatient with language, especially in its literary seductiveness, and always aware of a reality beyond verbal reach."[90] He goes to the extent of saying that such a writing is useless: "But even more radically, they would seem, if only by implication, to be structures impatient with themselves, denying their own validity, and if this is the case, why write (or read) at all? What value can the poem possibly have? Can it be anything more than a self-indulgent exercise in transforming a primary experience of the world into linguistic symbols?"[91] This kind of criticism does not apply to his poems 'Spel Against Demons', 'Smokey the Bear Sutra' and 'The California Water Plan' included in his book *The Fudo Trilogy* in which the poet does not simply describe what is happening around him but also makes people conscious of the weaknesses in their behaviours and suggests to them what they should do. For example, in the poem 'The California Water Plan' first he describes a scene of rainfall:

> Thunderstorm downpours on 395—south of
> Bridgeport—and looking down into Mono Lake,
> *crackling*
> that fiery spirit, dark fist mudras
> two crossed fists
> lighting jagged lines.[92]

But when he comes to the description of Fudo, he suggests that Fudo should be meditated upon and worshipped.

Robert Kern believes that Snyder's practice of putting disconnected details in his poems is something undesirable. In his article 'Recipes, Catalogues, Open Forms Poetics: Gary Snyder's Archetypal Voice' he argues: "Yet it must be pointed out that the most radical way of open forms, such as Snyder's catalogues, neither 'adopt the outer forms of logical discourse' nor even try 'to convey the fiction of spontaneous ordering.' Instead, from Wesling's Coleridgean perspective, they seem content to appear as 'mere dead arrangements' and some sort of distinction is obviously necessary between such poems and Wesling's 'continuous poem', inclusive and useful as that notion is with regard to the post-romantic lyric in general."[93] Kern too explains how details form a pattern in Snyder's poems and says: "Like the poets in the postromantic tradition that Wesling describes, Snyder is fascinated by 'dissolving identities' a fascination reinforced in his case by a serious interest in Buddhism, with its view of the world as 'a vast interrelated network' of creatures and objects existing in 'mutual interdependence,', and its stress on the illusory nature of the self. In fact, the self can only begin to exist for Snyder once it has dissolved as a separate entity and assumed its authentic status as a part of its total environmental context. In this sense the self undergoes no dissolution at all but, rather, is enhanced and supported by the reality which is its true and intimate extension."[94] Abraham Rothberg too does not like Snyder's practice of putting various details together and finds it to be a sign of the poet's incapability to discriminate between what is worth-selecting and what is worth-rejecting. He observes: "The major problem in Snyder's poetry is that he can rarely achieve the unity of thought and language required of a good poem. Usually, he is caught up in that poetic quicksand that swallows so much of the work of Whitman and Carlos Williams and the 'Beats': the cataloguing of natural

objects, mundane events, and sensory impressions until they are meaningless and boring. In short, there is a failure of poetic discrimination and organisation which is in itself a failure of sensibility."[95] Rothberg does not take into account the fact that Snyder adheres to the Zen way of writing—a way in which one is required to record things as they visit the mind without connecting them together.[96] If keeping things disconnected is the mark of, if Rothberg is to be believed, a failure of sensibility, it is also the mark of the success of a Zen practitioner. One has to keep in mind the fact that Snyder is a Zen poet. In fact, poetry has been being used as an instrument rather than as an end in itself: a Christian poet is likely to use it to serve the cause of Christianity, a Vedantic thinker to serve the cause of Vedanta, and a Buddhist for the service of Buddhism. Moreover, there are a large number of poems in which Snyder tightly connects all the details together and none of them can be called a hanging thread. For instance, in *Fudo Trilogy* the poet analyses the ills of life in the first section of the poem and the details are various parts of one whole, and then suggests a remedy for it when he talks of the incarnation of Achala in its last section. In his article "The Ecological Vision of Gary Snyder" Thomas J. Lyon highly admires Snyder's descriptions of nature. He observes that Snyder has succeeded in establishing a direct link between the revolutionary states of human consciousness and the outer wilderness of nature and asserts: "The direct link between the two sides of wild integrity is the ground of the ecological values. Piercing the link enables one to stand with and among, yet retaining and developing the consciousness of membership—or the ironies of mental separateness. Either way, this sort of perception calls into question the major assumption of Western civilisation. By going beyond both technohumanist instrumentalism and cutely impotent romanticism, this approach

builds a whole new mind."[97] If Snyder has recorded in his poems what is based on actual observation of the objects of nature, though his descriptions appear to be so, he has done something worthwhile, because the more faithfully one can record the facts of life and preserve them with the help of the Muse the better it is. As a matter of fact, a writer draws people's attention to various aspects of the universe and makes them conscious of their appeal to their sense of beauty. If a writer depends on imagination rather than actual observation, his writing will not be worth much. That is why the writers in whose works what actually exists in the universe has been recorded are considered more valuable than the others whose works have little to do with actual life. The statement applies as much to literary writers as to the writers in other fields. Truth is much more valuable than fiction even in fiction.

The Beats take material for their images from both the human world and the world of nature. When Jack Kerouac writes: "'...your lips in your moments of self-possessed thought and new found responsible goodness are as silent, make as least a noise, and mystify with sense in nature, like the light of an automobile reflecting from the shiny silver paint of a sidewalk tank this very instant, as silent and all this as a bird crossing the dawn in search of the mountain cross and the sea beyond the city at the end of the land,"[98] he fuses the scientific world and the world of nature together as the light of an automobile here represents the scientific world while the bird and the mountain represent nature. The image of 'the laugh of a radio maniac' in the sentence "His life was maniacal, it started low and ended high, exactly like the laugh of a radio maniac, only faster and more like a titter. Then he kept reverting to business tones.[99] Such images are based on the observation of the facts of life, but some images are based on philosophical concepts. Such is the image in the following

passage: "Meanwhile smoke sorrows from red dusk roofs in winter New England and our shadows in the brown frozen grass are like remembrances of what must have happen [*sic*] a million of neons ago in the Same and blazing Nirwana—Samsara Blown—Out—Turned—On light."[100] The philosophical concepts of Nirvana and Samsara have been taken from the Buddhist philosophy. Here shadows are compared to remembrances. Here a thing of the physical world has been compared to a thing of the mental world and what is perceptible with the eyes has been compared to what exists only in the mental world.

Kerouac discovers similarities between human creations and the creations of nature. He does it, for instance, when he compares a silo to a worm and says: "...behind it even more vaguely is the lunar underground a crazy huge uplifting *sic* wheat silo painted wild aluminum and glowing like a June worm in the darkness of the plains...."[101] Here the novelist discovers a similarity between the glows of a living being and a thing and the image has an appeal to the human sense of sight.

How Kerouac tries to make a spiritual phenomenon communicable by comparing it to a natural phenomenon can be seen in the following passage: "'I realised it was only because of the stability of the intrinsic Mind that these ripples of birth and death took place, like the action of wind on a sheet of pure, serene, mirror-like water."[102] The action of the wind on water can be watched by a reader quite easily on a windy day. As a matter of fact, the images of this kind make an experience communicable and what would have evaded a reader's grasp otherwise is grasped by him if such images are used by a writer. It is such images that serve the purpose for which images are brought into existence. If a writer compares something to an experience which the readers cannot have, the very

purpose of an image is defeated. In the following sentence Kerouac compares his personal experience with another personal experience: "The subway lady is sitting on side bench holding *Journal American* up with two blackgloved hands—a funny elly-like but aged (fifty-five) face with glasses, looking oddly French-Canadian, like an aunt of mine who pursed her lips the same way among the wood-piles of West Massachussetts or North Maine on gray exhalation days of piney mist as her sons stood akimbo in the yard—....'"[103] The narrator has seen his aunt's face but a reader cannot be expected to have done it and he will have to depend on his imagination to be able to see how the narrator's aunt pursed her lips. Such images do not help a writer in making his experience communicable.

Sometimes Kerouac gives a series of images to explain an idea. He does it, for example, in the sentence: "...something worm...and yet danklike leftover oozes of winter—like the wet boughs shining at three o'clock in a March afternoon—...."[104]

Simile is Kerouac's favourite figure of speech. This is evident from the fact that just on one page of *Visions of Cody*[105] Kerouac gives the following similes:

1. "...fat as cornpudding...."
2. "...careering...like a flag...."
3. "...just like Julien and Cecily on other roofs...."
4. "...humming little drowsy songs like the wind...."
5. "...in colorless shroudy apron more like the great dresses of Dutch navvies in old black prints...."
6. "...throwing precipitate like wheat from a wagon...."
7. "...it seemed like an angel, suddenly being shown to the tea-heads...."
8. "...Simple Like Ruth in the Corn...."

The sources of these images are wild nature, the human world and the scriptures. These are unelaborated similes. But Kerouac also gives epic similes. Here is one such simile in which even the bull and the matador are described in detail: "...now there's only the great silence of the greatest moment of Hollywood, the actual *TAKE*...just as in a bullfight, when the moment comes for the matador to stick his sword into the bull and kill it, and the matador makes use firmly of this allotted moment,..."[106] Such images are an evidence of the fact that Kerouac's art is akin to Henry, Fielding's as Fielding too gives epic similes in his 'comic epics in prose.'

Since Kerouac sympathises with the people who have not been able to find important places in the industrial societies, he uses them for the purposes of his imagery too. He compares two characters with construction workers when he writes: "...then these tremendous brawling bare to which Cody and I repaired for gabbling talks...as if Cody and I were construction workers not dissipates who dissipate so much it becomes a principle and finally a philosophy and finally a revelation—...."[107]; he compares autumn season to a soldier when he says:" '...when the general autumn dying quietly like a brave soldier overwhelms them...."'[108]; and he compares Cody with an Episcopalian farmer boy when he writes: "'Cody, very like an Episcopalian farmer boy going to Church the Sunday morning before his wedding...literally had to be led stupidly and stiffly down the street.' "[109]

Ginsberg too takes material for his images from the world of nature as well as the human world. In his poem 'T.V. Baby' he uses an image from wild nature when he says: "...the mass media assemble themselves like Congolese ants for a purpose/in the massive clay mound an undiscovered huge Queen is born, ..."[110] The image has an

easy appeal as it is the tendency to work together that joins ants with mass media. But the image of a politician in the line: "It is here, the long Awaited bleap—blast light that Speaks [*sic*] one red tongue like Politician [*sic*]...."[111] has apparently been taken from the human world. The same is the case with the image of the tribe of man in the line: "...either we blow ourselves up now and die, like the old tribe of man, ..."[112] When he describes trees, he compares them to living organisms in the lines: "...the trees seemed like live/organisms on the moon."[113] and attributes movement to stationary trees. He also uses his familiarity with scientific instruments for his images and does it, for example, in the lines:

> I attempted to concentrate
> the total sun's rays in
> each poem as through a glass,
> but such magnification
> did not set the page afire.[114]

where he likens a poem to a magnifying glass. Ginsberg employs concrete images rather than abstract ones. Such a practice is desirable as it helps the reader in becoming able to visualise the thing described in a vivid manner. But at places he uses very crude objects for the purpose. For instance, he does it in his poem 'Sometime Jailhouse Blues' when he likens thought to a stone.[115] The image of a potter which Ginsberg uses in the following lines of 'Bop Lyrics': "I'm a pot and God's a potter,/And my hand's a piece of putty,"[116] is a conventional image as it has been used by Robert Browning in his poem 'Rabbi Ben Ezra' when the poet calls God a potter, human beings cups and Time the potter's wheel.

Ginsberg's poem 'In Back of the Real' is written a great deal like Wordsworth's 'Daffodils'. If in 'Daffodils' Wordsworth describes himself to be wandering 'lonely as

a cloud', Ginsberg shows himself to be wandering 'desolate' when he says: "I wandered desolate/in front of a tank factory...."[117] In Wordsworth's poem the flower remains only a source of joy, but in Ginsberg's poem it becomes the symbol of the world, as the poet explains its meaning in the closing line of the poem. For Wordsworth the flowers are dancing but Ginsberg finds it to be dreadful and calls it 'dread hay flower'.[118] In both the cases the flowers are yellow but Ginsberg, like a typical Beat poet, likens it to a used shaving brush.

Snyder too uses nature as a source of his images. When he says: "Slowly consumed, like fire down a candle;/ Forever flowing, like a passing river"[119] he takes material for his image from nature. Lawrence Ferlinghetti too takes his images from the world of nature. When in his poem 'Pictures of the Gone World' he compares the setting of the sun to the falling of gulls in the lines:

> when the last sun hung on the hills
> and I hear the day falling
> like the galls that fell
> almost to land.[120]

he compares one scene of nature with another. He does the same thing when he compares the sun to 'a bird on a bench about to sing' in the lines:

> Dada would have loved a day like this
> with its light-bulb sun
> which shines so differently
> for different people
> but which still shines the same
> on every one
> and on everything
> such as
> a bird on a bench about to sing

a plane in a gilded cloud
a dishpan hand
waving at a window
or a phone about to ring
or a mouth about to give up
smoking[121]

Here the poet gives a series of similes just as Shelley does in his poem 'To a Skylark' when he likens the bird to a poet, a glowworm, a highborn maiden and a rose.

Lawrence Ferlinghetti takes material for images from the human world too. When in the lines:

Midnight Moscow Airport
sucks me in from Siberia
And blows me out alone
in a black bus
down dark straight night roads
stark snow plains
eternal taiga
into monster Moscow....[122]

with which his poem 'MOSCOW in the Wilderness, Segovia in the Snow' opens, the poet describes the airport as if it were a magician sucking a person in as a human being and then blowing him out in a different form This is a visual image. The poet loves to make experiences visual to such an extent that in the lines:

fields & [*sic*] fields & [*sic*] fields
of frozen music
melted on the bus radios....[123]

he converts an auditory experiences into a visual one.

The Beats intermingle the sublime and the contemptible. A Beat poet may quote a *mantra* in the first line and may

say something profane in the second line. This is, for example, so in Allen Ginsberg's poem 'New York to San Fran' when the poet talks of Lord Shiva in the opening lines and switches over to his belly and the groan of a machine in the latter ones:

> The most beautiful Mantra, 'Hari
> Om Namo Shiva—'
> And the vibration of Shiva
> in my belly merges
> with the groan of machine
> flying into milky sky—[124]

Kerouac too indulges in such a practice: the novelist makes a character think over metaphysical problems and, then, all of a sudden, brings him to the particulars of the road. He does it, for example, in the following passage: "...if I'm going to die why do I get to feel so good and howcome I feel so good so often anyhow, I don't even figure with any exactness what my next shoes will be bought out of,...."[125] Here the narrator first talks about the question of his dying or surviving and then shifts suddenly to the problem of buying shoes. Jumping from the problem of survival to that of buying shoes is just like coming from the heights of a hill to its bottom.

William Burroughs believes that a writer should faithfully record whatever he is able to perceive. He asserts: "There is only one thing a writer can write about: *What* is in front of his senses at the moment of writing.... I am a recording instrument.... I do not presume to impose 'story' 'plot' 'continuity'...."[126] Kerouac too does not arrange incidents to give them the shape of a geometrical design. Nor does he arrange incidents to let his plots have a beginning, a middle, and an end. In his novels one incident follows another. Such a practice of writing is closer to life than the one in which incidents are rearranged according

to some design and life is falsified. If life is to be faithfully recorded, the incidents of life should be put together as faithfully as possible. No doubt, literary artists invent characters and incidents, but such practice lowers down the worth of a book as a record of the facts of life.

Jack Kerouac's writing also gives the impression that he reproduces, with minor changes, what he finds happening around him. The following description in his novel *Desolation Angels* can be quoted for illustration: "All of a sudden on an innocent moonlit Tuesday night I turn on the radio for the bull session and hear all the excitement about lightning, the Ranger has left a message with Pat on Crater Mountain for me to call at once, ...it seems as though the six weeks of lonely bored solitude on Desolation Peak has come to an end and I'm *down* again, ..."[127] The description of the moonlit night and the excitement about lightning is photographic. But the word "innocent" used to describe the night is the narrator's comment.

Norman Podhoretz finds "solipsism" in Kerouac's novels. He observes: "Solipsism is precisely what characterises Kerouac's fiction. *On the Road* and *The Subterraneans* are so patently autobiographical in content that they become almost impossible to discuss as novels; if spontaneity were indeed a matter of destroying the distinction between life and literature, these books would unquestionably be it."[128] He finds that Keroauac gives various details in his books which have no purpose behind them. He points out: "What you get in these two books is a man proclaiming that he is *alive* and offering every trivial experience he has ever had in evidence. Once I did this, once I did that (he is saying) and by God, it *meant* something! Because I responded! But if it meant something, and you responded so powerfully, why can't you explain what it meant, and why do you have to insist so?"[129]

However, if Kerouac's works are autobiographical and if nothing else than names of persons have been changed in them, they should be studied as the records of the facts of life and, hence, they have become more important than fictional works as one can study in them what kind of deed results in what kind of effect in this universe and they can enable one to arrive at true facts of life.

Jack Kerouac's works are heavily loaded with symbols, though at various places the novelist himself explains what a symbol stands for. The road, for example, is the most significant symbol in his novel *On the Road* as it keeps all the incidents of the novel tied together in one whole. The novelist himself explains it when he says: "'...the road is life.'"[130] This is a traditional symbol. But when in his novel *Desolation Angels* he makes the bear the spirit of nature or even Avalokitesvara, he uses a personal symbol. The description of this bear in the following lines suggests that it is much more than a bear: "He will not show himself in the mystery of those silent foggy shapes, tho [*sic*] I look all day, as tho he were the inscrutable Bear that cant [*sic*] be looked into—... He has millenniums of thus—prowling here behind him—He has seen Indians and Redcoats come and go, and will see it again—"[131] In the scene described in the lines: "...the boat was pulling away from the pier and Japhy came out on deck with Psyche in his arms and threw her clean off the boat, he was strong enough to throw a girl ten feet, right on the pier, where Sean helped catch her."[132] The Orient too is a symbol in the works of Kerouac. It symbolises the source of spiritual enlightenment as the following lines from his novel *The Town and the City* suggest: "Tommy is going off to the Orient; we're saying goodbye to him.... We're on the threshold of a new age, and God knows what it's going to be—in any case, hugely important to mankind.'"[133] This observation has been made by Alexander and he regards

Tommy's journey as something much more than an ordinary journey. Since American writers like Emerson have treated the Orient as a source of spiritual enlightenment and the Beats themselves have taken a number of their doctrines from Indian and Japanese philosophies (see *supra*), it is logical to interpret their orient as a source of spiritual enlightenment.

Light too has been used as a symbol. In Kerouac's novel *Tristessa* it is used as a symbol of wisdom when Jack says: "At the root of the Mystery the separation of one world from another by a sword of light—"[134] It is a conventional symbol. In Kerouac's works like *On the Road* and *Tristessa* America and Mexico have been treated as the symbols of troubles and relief. So long as the pilgrims are in America, they have nothing but miseries to face, but when they go to Mexico they find themselves in a home of bliss. In *Tristessa* Mexico has been called "a Bohemian Adventure in the great outdoor plateau night of stones, candles and mist...."[135] America is shown to be a place of conflicts, while Mexico to be one of love and peace. These symbols are personal. The Major whom the hobos in *On the Road* regard as a check on their freedom and who calls Dean "a moron and a fool"[136] stands for the Establishment of America while the hobos stand for the Beats. The attitude of the Beats towards the Establishment finds expression in another encounter between the hobos and the Major in the 9th chapter of the novel in the following passage: "Major staggered up a dark street. 'What the hell's the matter? Any fights? Just call on me.' Great laughter rang from all sides."[137] This laughter signifies the rejection of the approach of the Establishment. Likewise, the cops who make their appearance in the 11th chapter stand for the Establishment of the country as they are the instruments through whom the laws are enforced and hobos are made to realise that they are not allowed to behave in an unrestrained manner.

Climbings up and down the mountains too symbolise meditating activities. Unless this is kept in mind, the whole description of Japhy's movements will look absurd. Here is the description of Japhy and Ray's movements: "Then suddenly everything was just like jazz: it happened in one insane second or so: I looked up and saw Japhy *running down the mountain* in huge twenty-foot leaps, running, leaping, landing with a great drive of his booted heels, bouncing five feet or so, running, then taking another long crazy yelling yode laying sail down the sides of the world and in that flash I realised *it's impossible to fall off mountains you fool....*"[138] If one takes the statement "it's impossible to fall off mountains" literally and climbs up a mountain with this notion in one's mind, one may soon lose one's existence. Similar is the following description: "... I suddenly got up and began running down the mountain after him doing exactly the same huge leaps, the same fantastic runs and jumps.... I took off my sneakers and poured out a couple of buckets of lava dust and said 'Ah Japhy you taught me the final lesson of them all, you can't fall off a mountain.'

"'And that's what they mean by the saying, When you get to the top of a mountain keep climbing, Smith.'"[139] Getting to the top of the mountain here means attaining spiritual enlightenment. When the two passages are read in the light of D.T. Suzuki's statement: "Not the intellectual maneuver or logical trickery, but the whole of our being is needed to effect a penetration. It is, the Zen master would tell us, like climbing up to the end of a pole one hundred feet long and yet being urged to climb on and on until you have to execute a desperate leap, utterly disregarding your existential safety"[140] it becomes evident that they are not to be taken in their literal senses. Such symbols are used by mystic poets like Emily Dickinson and the Hindi poet Kabir.

Ginsberg too uses a number of symbols in his poems. For instance, in the following lines of his poem 'Dakar Doldrums'

> Sweet carols that I made, and caroller serene,
> They broke my heart, and sang for thee alone.
> Secret to thee the Nightingale was Death;
> So all the figures are that I create.[141]

the nightingale is the symbol of death, as the poet himself has observed. This is an unusual and unnatural symbol because a nightingale singing during the night makes it resemble life-in-death rather than death. In the poem 'Hospital Window' it is through the symbols of the cars, the hospital and the patients that the poet embodies his view of the Western civilisation. Giving a glimpse of what the poet finds in his country he says:

> Cars running up
>
> East River Drive, & [*sic*] parked at N.Y. Hospital's
> oval door
> where perfect tulip flower the health of a thousand
> sick souls
> trembling inside hospital rooms.[142]

Here the cars stand for the outward glister of the modern civilisation, and the patients inside the hospitals for its dropouts including the Beats.

Jack Kerouac's novels are full of the descriptions of landscapes, incidents, birds, and lower animals. While describing landscapes he writes about mountains, trees, lakes, birds and clouds. Here is, for instance, a scene of sunrise: "A beautiful morning—red pristine shafts of sunlight coming in over the hill and slanting down into the cold trees like cathedral light, and the mists rising to

meet the sun, and all the way around the giant secret roar of tumbling creeks probably with films of ice in the pools, a great fishing country."[143] The novel *The Town and the City* opens with the description of a river, falls, hills, and valleys: "The town is Galloway. The Merrimac River, broad and placid, flows down to it from the New Hampshire hills, broken at the falls to make frothy havoc on the rocks, foaming on over ancient stone towards a place where the river suddenly swings about in a wide and peaceful basin, moving on now around the flank of the town, on to places known as Lawrence and Haverhill, through a wooded valley, and on to the sea at Plum Island, where the river enters an infinity of waters and is gone."[144] The description gives the impression that the novelist is describing a scene which he has actually seen. The phrases 'frothy havoc' and 'an infinity of waters' suggest not only the large quantities of froth and water but also the novelist's sense of bewilderment to see them. This novelist does not write like a factual reporter and colours the scenes with his own imagination and feelings. For example, in the lines: "Something in the invisible brooding landscape surrounding the town, something in the bright stars nodding close to a hillside where the old cemetery sleeps, something in the soft swishing treeleaves [*sic*] over the fields and stone walls tells him a different story."[145] he attributes human characteristics to the landscape and makes it brood. Likewise, he makes the cemetery sleep. Birds are made scouts and fish are made to smile secretly in the sentence: "Birds scouted over the water looking for secret smiling fish that only occasionally suddenly leaped flying out of the water and arched their backs and fell in again into the water that rushed on and obliterated their loophole, and everything was swept along."[146] The novelist calls the 'leaping' of the fish 'flying'. Here it is the movement of creatures that has been described. But in the following description Ray Smith

makes the objects of nature bhikhus and treats them as his other selves: "As I looked up the clouds assumed, as I assumed, faces of hermits. The pine boughs looked satisfied washing in the waters. The top trees shrouded in gray fog looked content. The jiggling sunshine leaves of Northwest breeze seemed bred to rejoice.... 'The mountains are mighty patient, Buddha-men', I said out loud and took a drink."[147] P.B. Shelley too treats the west wind, the skylark and the cloud in the same manner in his poems written on them.

Kerouac's descriptions of the sun-rise and the sunset are remarkable for the meetings of light and mists. Here is a description of a sunrise: "A beautiful morning—red pristine shafts of sunlight coming in over the hill and slanting down into the cold trees like cathedral light, and the mists rising to meet the sun, and all the way around the giant secret roar of tumbling creeks probably with films of ice in the pools."[148] In the following description of a sunset too sea-foams of cloud are confronted by icefields: "Mad raging sunsets poured in seafoams of cloud through unimaginable crags, with every rose tint of hope beyond, I felt just like it, brilliant and bleak beyond words. Everywhere awful icefields and snowstraws; one blade of grass juggling in the winds of infinity, anchored to a rock. To the east it was gray; to the north, awful; to the west raging mad, hard iron fools wrestling in the groomian gloom; to the south, my father's mist."[149] It is the feelings of the onlooker which have overpowered the objects observed. The ways of the lower animals like dogs, roosters and hens too have been described in *Tristessa.* Here is the description of the ways of a hen: "She digs the people. She wants to come up near me and rub illimitably against my pant leg, but I dont give her encouragement...."[150] Such a practice joins Kerouac with Dickens who describes the ways of Barkis' horse and Dora's dog in *David Copperfield.*

But this should not take one to believe that Kerouac always talks of the beauty of nature. He also describes the troubles people have to face when they find themselves in the lap of nature. He does it, for example, in the following passage: "'Thousands of mosquitoes had already bitten all of us on chest and arms and ankles....I realised the jungle takes you over and you become it.... For the first time in my life the weather was not something that touched me, that caressed me, froze or sweated me, but became me. The atmosphere and I became the same.'"[151] Wordsworth's Nature gives its lover peace and moral lessons, but Kerouac's Nature tries to make a man its own part just as in the passage quoted above the jungle makes a man become a jungle.

Ann Charters praises Kerouac's art of describing incidents and landscapes for their accuracy when she observes: "Read as historian, Kerouac was a very accurate reporter. His memory and his detailed journal notes kept the record straight. He usually omitted facts rather than invent them. He shaped every page he wrote by his selection of details and emphasis, of course, but he was faithful to his idea of the spirit of what's happened, even if some of the minor details were shuffled around a little for libel purposes. The only book which departed significantly from what actually happened was *The Subterraneans*, where Jack placed the action in San Francisco instead of New York.[152] However, Kerouac's main concern is not the objects he describes but the feelings he expresses through his descriptions. That is why he describes a large quantity of froth as 'frothy havoc' and a large quantity of water as 'an infinity of water' [see *supra*].

Bruce Cook too admires Kerouac for giving details when he says: "Details are the real strength of the road novels. In these books he is the open eye that sees it all, the

memory that retains it all, the fingers that record it all with accuracy. Kerouac was a remarkable reporter, a recorder of things that happened just as they happened. And he seems to have retained the experience that went into the writing of these road novels only a relatively short time, in most cases no longer than a year."[153] He believes that these works "belong less to the province of fiction than to journalism."[154] But the fact should be regarded as something desirable because literature is a study of life through characters, incidents, landscapes and language and if they have been taken from life, the study will be found to be more accurate. No doubt literary writers create incidents and characters, but if a writer takes incidents from life, his work gains strength.

Snyder's descriptions appeal to the senses of smell and touch as much as to that of sight and have made Snyder a sensuous poet like Keats. Here is a description that appeals to the sense of sight:

> In the frozen grass
> wild horses stand
> beyond a row of pines.[155]

The line: "Mashed bushes make strange smells.[156] has an appeal to the sense of smell, and the lines: "Each dawn is clear/Cold air bites the throat,"[157] have an appeal to the sense of touch. The following description of a lake gives the impression that the poet likes to describe lakes with their waves and fish:

> a half iced-over lake,twelve thousand feet
> its sterile boulder bank
> but filled with leaping trout:
> reflections wobble in the
> mingling circles always spreading out

the crazy web of wavelets makes sense
soon from high above.[158]

The poet has mentioned the parts of the scene he likes, but does not explain his meaning explicitly. Nor does he write properly constructed sentences. This fact signifies that he is hurriedly mentioning the glimpses of the scene which has caught his imagination.

Snyder describes fir-cones, swarms of new flies, rocks, meadows, horses, grasshoppers, pools, the still night air, cats, pinetrees, fir trees, the frost, the dawn, sparrows, owls, black ant, yellow jackets, marshed bushes, camprobbers, coyotes, kites, the sea bank, a marmot, rains, bussels, fields full of ducks, eucalyptus trees, hummingbirds, swallows, bears, spiders, the dew, the tall grass, and a huge moon. In his poem 'Prayer for the Great Family'[159] he expresses his love for the earth, plants, air, wild animals, water, the sun, and the sky. His poems 'Source' and 'Manzanita' included in the volume *Turtle Island* evidence the fact that he loves to write about manzanitas, gold-purple pines, woodpeckers and coyotes. Snyder untiringly describes landscapes and skyscapes and his descriptions convey that nature has immense beauty. Snyder loves hilly areas and uninhabited parts of the earth to describe. Here is a passage to illustrate this fact:

Avalanche piled up cross the creek
    and chunked-froze solid—
water sluicing under; spills out
    rock lip pool, bends over,
    braided, white, foaming,
returns to trembling
    deep-dark hole.[160]

Both a geographer and a painter may find his poems

interesting and useful for their purposes in their respective fields.

Snyder attributes human traits to inanimate objects of nature. For instance, he does it in the lines: "Jagged scarps forever snowed in/Woods in the dark ravines spitting mist"[161] where he makes ravines spit just as human beings do. The poet describes the behaviour of coyotes with affection for them when he writes in the poem 'Mazinita':

> Before dawn the coyotes
> weave medicine songs
> dream nets—spirit baskets—
> milky way music....

In the phrases 'medicine songs' 'dream nets' and 'spirit baskets' he joins abstract things with concrete ones.

Ginsberg's descriptions too are often graphic. For instance, in his poem 'Easter Sunday'[162] he gives detailed descriptions of the ways snow, streams, ducks, horses, coo coos, goat-bells and the like behave. Here is, for example, a long list of various activities:

> Slope woods snows melt
> Streams gush, ducks stand one foot
> beak eye buried in back feathers,
> Jerusalem pillars' good sunlight
> Yellow in window-shine, bright
> rays apikey-white flashed in mud, ...[163]

The poet records activities in an exhaustive way and does not let even the movement of the goatbells remain unnoticed. A glimpse of a graphic description can be seen in his poem 'Chicago to Salt Lake by Air' in which a landscape is described:

> Detroit's lake from a mile above chemical muddy,

> streams of grey waste fogging the surface to the centre, more than half the lake dissolved metallic—Cancerous reproductions the house flats rows of bee....[164]

Such descriptions owe their origin to Ginsberg's view that "Mind is fragments..."[165] Ginsberg loves cataloguing things. For instance, in his poem 'Transcription of Organ Music' he enlists whatever he finds in the scene he describes and, then, comes to his meeting with the Creator: "The rambler vine climbed up the cottage post, the leaves in the night still where the day had placed them, the animal heads of the flowers where they had arisen/to think at the sun...."[166] His tendency to catalogue objects and activities can be seen better in his poem 'In the Baggage Room at Greyhound' in which he enlists things and activities like suitcases waiting to be opened, damaged handles, vanished nameplates, busted wires, broken ropes, and trunks exploding on the concrete floor.[167] By making use of participles the poet also includes in his descriptions the details of the activities he describes.

Like Snyder Ginsberg too describes skyscapes, though he is more interested in the affairs of human beings. Here is a skyscape of Ginsberg, for instance:

> The little silver cow clouds flow
> eastward under the wing
> the Horizon's a blue mug, there's
> green furze of forest naked & [*sic*]
> unpioneered with little
> strings of highway and houses
> brown pendant—[168]

But it is a part of the sky seen from an aeroplane. It means the poet is still looking downward rather than upward. Like Snyder he attributes human traits to the objects of

nature. For instance, he does it in his poem 'The Trembling of the 'Veil' when he makes the wind push trees in the lines:

> ...all the arms of the trees
> bending and straining downward
> at once when the wind
> pushed them.[169]

The birds Ginsberg mentions in his poem 'A Very Dove'[170] are the dove, the hawk, the gull and the nightingale. In the poem 'Psalm'[171] he mentions the nightingale, the phoenix, and the swan. They make it evident that the poet describes not only actual birds but also the birds like the phoenix which exist only in the world of imagination.

In his descriptions Ginsberg pays attention to disorder, haphazardness and dirt too and does not keep himself confined to flowers, clouds and birds. The following lines from his diary-entry 'To P.O.' make it evident:

> A whitewashed room on the roof
> on a third rate Mohammedan hotel
> two beds, the blurred fan
> whirling over yr [*sic*] brown guitar
> knapsack open on the floor, towel
> hanging on a chair, an orange crush,
> brown paper package of manuscripts,
> Tibetan Tankas, Gandhi pajamas,
> Indian books and a bright umbrella,
> all in a mass on a rickety wooden stand.[172]

He does not treat even disorder and ugliness to be unpoetic topics.

W.T. Lahmon asserts in his short article 'Ginsberg in Florida': "There's no doubt that Ginsberg is committed to poetry as song, the singer as shaman, the shaman as

singer of the body—the body public and the body politic.... From *Howl*...Ginsberg has been continuously matching his rhythms to America's only authentic art form—jazz, rock and blues. They are the national resources he sought nearly a generation past. And he's using them still. He mixes them with his charismatic, eclectic alchemy to fuse a national resource all his own still in 1975."[173] But the fact is that Ginsberg does not pay sufficient attention to his art. It is only to his message that he keeps himself primarily concerned.

Just as for some philosophical concepts Ginsberg is indebted to the Orient, for some of his aesthetic beliefs too he is indebted to the Orient. That is why it is essential to examine his works in the light of the principles of Oriental literary criticism. The fact has been mentioned by Thomas F. Merrill when he says: "As a poem 'Cezanne's Ports' pales before the grandiose theory behind it.... Part of Ginsberg's appreciation of this particular painting can he explained by the Oriental esthetic [*sic*] that seems to govern it. The painting (and therefore the poem) centres on what is *not* included within the frame.... Such interest in the non-represented is all patently mystical, but one feels that looking through this particular glass darkly makes for a smudgy poetic experience."[174]

The Beat writers choose situations which arouse the emotions of pity, affection and surprise. Gary Snyder, for example, shows how people cause misery to animals in his poem 'Two Fawns that Didn't See the Light this Spring'. In this poem included in his volume *Turtle Island* he shows that a 'friend' in the Northern Rockies shoots down a doe carrying a fawn, "cure[s] the meat without salt" and slices it "following the grain." Another 'friend in the Northern Sierra' hits a doe with her car, and then the poet describes the tender beauty of a fawn:

> ...there was a fawn—about so long—
> so tiny—but all formed and right.
> It had spots. And the little
> hooves were soft and white.[175]

Here we have an example of *karuna rasa*[176]: the fawn is the object of pity, its tender and handsome body acts as an intensifier of that emotion, the poet's describing its dead body is his physical response to the scene of death, and his trying to recollect how the fawn died is his mental response to it.[177]

Kerouac frequently describes situations which move the reader to pity. Such situations are concerned with death, partings, parental affection for their children, ailments causing misery to people, miseries caused by wars, and small capitalists' losing capital and becoming the members of the working class. Such situations abound in Kerouac's novel *The Town and the City*. Here is an example of such a situation in which there is a meeting between Mrs. Martin and her son Joe who has come home after a long absence: "When Joe began to tap on the window-pane the women looked up sharply with the inquiring, incisive air women have when they're home and there is a knock from outside. When they saw who it was they turned to each other that swift glance of stunned prophecy. They rose from their chairs with a cry and came scurrying to the door. Joe bounded up the steps. In a moment he was being smothered with kisses, the women were crying: 'it's Joey, it's Joey! He's come back! Oh, my God! '...."[178] Here Mrs. Martin and her companions are the persons in whose hearts affection for the offspring rises, Joe is the cause of this affection, smothering Joe with kisses is the physical manifestation of the emotion and the joy which makes them cry is the its mental manifestation. Thus here we have *vatsalya rasa* or the aesthetic pleasure caused by the description of parental

affection. Another scene where there is *vatsalya rasa* is the one in which *Peter* is bidding farewell to his father and the latter asks him to worry only about himself: "'No, no, no, don't talk like that! 'cried the old man quickly. 'I don't want you to be sending any money home, do you hear me? We'll make out, we'll make out. Petey, my little boy,' he said gripping Peter's arm, shaking him gently, 'all I want you to do is to make good in college and football.'"[179] Here old Martin is the person in whose heart the parental affection is aroused, Peter is the cause, the father's gripping the son's hand is its physical manifestation and the pride he feels in his son's achievements is its mental manifestation. How the experiences of life disillusion a man has been shown in the following speech: "'Isn't it true that you start your life a sweet child believing in everything under your father's roof? Then comes the day of the Laodiceans, when you know you are wretched and miserable and the poor blind and naked, and with the visage of a gruesome grieving ghost you go shuddering through nightmare life.'"[180] It is the thoughts of this kind which drive a man to asceticism and the realisation of such facts leads a man to enlightenment. Similar are the thoughts of an ailing child: "And he was going to spend eight months in this place—eight months of gloom and defeat and shame! For the first time in his life he felt completely abandoned and helpless and thoroughly frightened: what was he to do? He remembered all the loving care of his mother when she packed him off, the proud excitement in the house the night before he left,...."[181] Such passages make a tender appeal to the reader's heart.

Jealousy in love is another emotion which Kerouac describes in *The Town and the City* in detail. Francis finds it intolerable that his beloved Mary should enjoy the company of another boy. Kerouac describes his behaviour in the following words: "In the same half-demented state he

stood up, got on the bicycle and started up along the path, turning into the road and cycling along with that feeling of crazed wonder. He couldn't believe what had just happened: he tried to ignore it. 'I'll think about it later,' he said absentmindedly, and mused upon the countryside and the branches under which he glided swiftly."[182] Here the emotion is aroused in Francis' heart, Mary's being with Chuck is its cause, Francis' going away is its physical manifestation and his anger is its mental manifestation.

Kerouac's humour arouses horror when he makes his characters laugh at a moment of sadness. Here is a passage of this kind from his novel *The Town and the City* where Peter is shown laughing when he is being beaten by the officers: "One officer, who had hold of Peter's hair, was trying to bat his head against the sidewalk. Peter, laughing foolishly, held his neck rigid and went right on chatting forlornly with them. Something grim, sad and ugly had come into the fight now."[183] A character's laughing when torture is being inflicted on him will cause nothing but horror. Beats put such contradictory things together. We have another example of this device when Kerouac shows that George Martin's sons go a-fishing when his dead body is waiting to be buried.

Ann Charters gives a list of Kerouac's friends whom the novelist has converted into fictional characters.[184] In this list she shows that Jack Kerouac becomes Peter Martin in *The Town and the City*, Jack Duluoz in *Vanity of Duluoz*, Sal Paradise in *On the Road*, Leo Percepied in *The Subterraneans*, Ray Smith in *The Dharma Bums*, Jack Duluoz in *Desolation Angels* and Jack in *Book of Dreams;* Allen Ginsberg has been made Leon Levinsky in *The Town and the City*, Irwin Garden in *Vanity of Duluoz*, Carlo Marx in *On the Road*, Adam Moorad in *The Subterraneans*, Alvah Goldbook in *the Dharma Bums*, and Irwin Garden in *Desolation Angels, Big Sur*, and *Book of Dreams;* Neal Cassady has been

made Dean Moriarty in *On the Road* and Cody Pomeray in *The Dharma Bums, Desolation Angels, Big Sur,* and *Book of Dreams;* William Burroughs has been made Will Dinnison in *The Town and the City,* Will Hubbard in *Vanity of Duluoz* Old Bull Lee in *On the Road,* Frank Carmody in *The Subterraneans,* and Bull Hubbard in *Desolation Angels,* and *Book of Dreams;* and the like.[185] If this is so, Kerouac's novels are faithful records of the activities of his friends and himself and the fact makes them records worth-preserving. But, if Kerouac was recording them without changing their names; they would have become more worth-preserving than they are. The farther a thing is removed from reality, the less worth-preserving it is. That is why a writer should be as faithful to reality as possible. No doubt, literary writers often change the names of people and change the order of incidents in their works, but by doing so they lessen the worth of their books. The closer to reality a writer is, the better it is both for the work and the reader. Even if he wishes to communicate a moral, it will have a better appeal if it is done through the actual incidents of life.

Ann Charters records in *Kerouac: A Biography* that Jack Kerouac, while writing *Big Sur* felt "a little uncomfortable about what he was doing, using his friends' lives in book after book for his fictional narratives."[186] But using one's friends' lives for books should not cause discomfort. If one is recording facts in a book, one is doing a useful thing and his books will enjoy a long life. What should cause discomfort is presenting fictitious things as facts because that causes harm to both the teller and the reader. A writer who takes his task seriously and wishes to do something good for himself and for the rest of the world must record facts, as truth is embodied in facts rather than in falsehoods. Even the books of fiction are worthwhile mainly because some facts are included in them. If they are the bundles of

fictitious incidents and characters, they will do more harm than good.

In his book *Introduction to the Study of Literature* Hudson observes: "Thus literature makes us partakers in a life larger, richer, and more varied than we ourselves can ever know of our own individual knowledge; and it does this, not only because it opens up new fields of experience and new lines of thought and speculation, but also, and even more notably, because it carries us beyond the pinched and meagre humanity of our everyday round of existence into contact with those fresh, strong, and magnetic personalities who have embodied themselves in the world's great books."[187] But the farther a writer goes from facts the less valuable his works become. In this world falsehood often attains momentary success, but success is very short-lived, facts often appear to be weak but they cannot remain hidden and when they come to light once, they live a much longer life than fiction can ever do. One who champions the cause of truth attains a shining success. That is why one must keep oneself confined to the area of truth. One may argue that a literary writer discovers the truth of life through fiction. But that assertion must be replied by saying that a true champion of truth will not take the help of fiction and that he will discover the truth about human life through actual incidents and human beings. Hudson explains what literary writers do, but a more significant and important problem of aesthetics is what a writer should do. As a matter of fact a writer should take the facts of life into consideration and should explain through them what he has found life to be.

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154. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

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156. *Ibid.*, p. 244.

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160. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

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162. Gary Snyder, *Turtle Island* (New York: New Directions, 1974 [1969]), p. 27.

163. Coleridge too has written a poem on Easter. And the fact makes it evident that the Beats choose for their poems the subjects which have been chosen by their predecessors, especially Romantics.

164. A. Ginsberg, *The Fall of America* (New York: City Lights, 1972), p. 79.

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174. Thomas F. Merrill, *Allen Ginsberg* (New York: Twayne, 1969), pp. 69-70.

175. Gary Snyder, *Turtle Island* (New York: New Directions, 1974 [1969]), p. 58.

176. *Karuna rasa* is the Sanskrta name of the aesthetic pleasure that the reader gets on reading the description of the death of a virtuous or innocent character.

177. The technical terms for the object of pity, intensifier, physical response and mental response are *alambana vibhava, uddipana vibhava, anubhava* and *sanchari bhava* respectively.

178. Jack Kerouac, *The Town and the City* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1950), p. 150.

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6

Conclusion

Thus the Beats have tried to break the restraints imposed on the Western man's mind by the official ways of thinking. They find the official morality unacceptable and try to arrive at metaphysical and ethical enlightenment through the methods adopted by the Oriental thinkers like Gautama Buddha, Shankaracharya, Tantrics and Zen ascetics. The ends they wish to achieve are Western as they wish to realise the American dream of freedom, but they try to justify them also with the help of Oriental philosophies. Consequently, even if some views of Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, the Vedantic philosophy and the Tantra are embodied in the speeches and views of their characters, it does not mean that they are Buddhists, Zen Buddhists, upholders of the Vedantic philosophy or Tantrics. Nor does it mean that their characters are the upholders of various philosophical views and that their works are merely philosophical debates written to show the superiority of one philosophy over any other. They begin with the problems the Western civilisation is encountering, like the ones of war, imprisonment, killings and air-pollution, and come back to them, and use the concepts of Oriental civilisations to find causes and remedies of the miseries man has been encountering.

But the Beats have turned to only those Oriental philosophies which tried to justify the ways of common

people and opposed the ways of the Establishment. For instance, Gautama Buddha was a rebel against the view and ways of the orthodox Brahmins; and so was Shankaracharya. The Beats have neglected the philosophies upheld by the ruling classes of India, China and Japan, like the philosophies of the Brahmans and Confucius. In the Brahman philosophy distinction has been made between three ways, the *sattwic* ways, the *rajasic* ways and the *tamasic* ways and exclusively *sattwic* ways are considered desirable.[1] People in this universe indulge in all kinds of ways including the ones which are accompanied by a lot of misery. Such ways are declared undesirable ones by ethical thinkers. It is wrong to declare them desirable only because people like them. Indulging in cheating is a deed of this kind.

The Beats' literary compositions are an effort to convince people that all that the Establishment regards as acceptable is not acceptable and all that it regards as unacceptable is nor unacceptable. They have tried to bring it home to the Establishment of their country that its ways have been causing a lot of misery to various creatures, both human and non-human, even when they are innocent. That is why their works may arouse a feeling of guilt in the hearts of those who are contributing anything for the continuance of the ways of the Establishment.

The new possibilities Beats have shown in their works manifest that they have come to different conclusions: Snyder finds a panacea in love for nature and living in harmony with it like the people of the primitive communities; Ginsberg likes a pacifist political approach, and Kerouac wishes to lead a peaceful domestic life. Thus what they dislike is the offensive thrust in the Western civilisation. But their own suggestions are not always acceptable. For example, their own views on war and the holiness of every

creature draw the reader's attention to the fact that it is undesirable to indulge in thoughtless killings, yet what they ignore is the fact that it is equally undesirable to let the forces of vice, injustice and untruth remain free and unrestrained. There is misery in the world, no doubt, but it is there to make a man understand the difference between what is desirable and what is undesirable. Even now it is not easy to know what is desirable, but if misery had not been there, it would have become impossible to discover ethical rules. A literary writer is there neither to vindicate nor condemn all the ways of the people; he is there to show through his works what is desirable and what is not. Even law-makers are required only to discover these rules rather than devise them. If the distinction between the desirable and undesirable evades the grasp of a writer, his writing will not be worth much.

Moreover, the Beats' literary art stands in need of considerable change and improvement. It is essential to keep a literary composition free form indecent words and expressions. A literary writer is expected to be a guide for his readers. That is why it is essential for him to use a language that does not arouse disgust in the heart of the reader. The end of writing is communication and communication is possible when the writer is truthful to what he has experienced and felt and expresses it in a language which the readers are willing to read with delight. But if the readers are disgusted with the language of a writer, they will not like even to read his compositions, and, then, the question of communication does not arise.

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